

THE PLACE OF THUCYDIDES IN
ANCIENT HISTORIOGRAPHY

by

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of
The University of Utah
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of History

The University of Utah

May 2009

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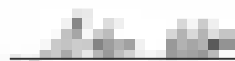
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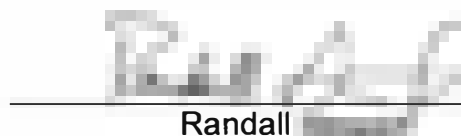
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ABSTRACT

Thucydides defined an important moment in ancient historiography. His work on the Peloponnesian War represented a significant departure from the work of Herodotus. He rejected the story-telling narrative of his predecessor in favor of a more analytical reporting of his chosen subject. He stated explicitly what has been termed "the Thucydidean method," which embraced personal experience, eyewitness testimony, personal investigation of location, a commitment to verifiable facts, and an acute inquiry into the human psychological and political underpinnings of causation. He at times offered authorial judgments on events, but his narrative style was calculated to enable the reader to come to his own conclusions. His impact on the subsequent historians of Greece and the Roman Republic and early Empire was considerable.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Professors Olsen and Stewart for their close review of my manuscript and all of their suggestions to improve it. I extend my gratitude especially to Lindsay, for nearly a decade of conversation about history and our shared love for the study of it. Finally to the kids, in particular the Bean, for all of their support and taking in stride the many updates I gave them on the progress of this work.

INTRODUCTION

The fulcrum upon which this thesis turns is Thucydides' method and narrative technique, his innovations over preceding historians, and the debt owed him by succeeding historians. In order to understand his impact, it is first helpful to look at the state of "history" before his work on the Peloponnesian War and determine exactly what his improvements were over the prior generations. This will be the subject of Chapter I. Chapter II will be devoted to his work. The next two chapters will look at his Greek and Roman continuators. These will be continuators not only in the sense that they "picked up where he left off," but also those who were influenced by his method and narrative technique. Chapter III will be devoted to Xenophon and the fragmentary evidences of the other Greek historians of the fourth and third centuries BC. Chapter IV will shift attention to the major Latin historians: Sallust, Livy and Tacitus. The Conclusion will offer not only some final observations on Thucydides' place in ancient historiography, but will point to some of the basic distinctions between Greek and Roman historians apart from style and method. These differences define the historical philosophy and the limits of the Roman approach. These final remarks will also consider the historian Polybius, a Greek historian writing at the time of the ascendancy of the Republican empire.

The questions that surround the abrupt end of Thucydides' work are addressed in the Epilogue, "On the Death of Thucydides." It makes for interesting

reading but does not fit neatly into the body of the main topic.

Just as there is no single line of literary evolution from Homer (*fl.* second half eighth c. BC?) to Herodotus (c. 480s-c. 420s BC) and Thucydides (c. 460/465-c. 400 BC),¹ the works of Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius, Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus do not illustrate a continuous development of historical writing over the course of the five hundred years spanned by the lives of these men.² It would be nice to find a golden thread in the works of the ancient historians to the point that the thread has formed into a great rope of intertwining strands which all have their source in the nascent beginnings of historical writing. Such a thread, of course, does not exist. Neither is a linear progression of sure historical methods evident in an investigation of the works of these writers of history. There are certain familiars that emerge in one historian, absent in the next and found again in a later one.

Nonetheless, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in his work *On Thucydides*, outlines a linear development of historical method. He says that history, as a discipline, started with a number of ancient historians writing with “like bent in the choice of their subjects” and “little difference in their abilities.”³ They wrote local histories, giving separate accounts of each nation or state, Greek and non-Greek. These bare records, written in unadorned and meager style, were then “expanded and rendered more splendid” by Herodotus in his all-encompassing

¹ Except where noted, all dates have been taken from *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd edition, revised, ed. Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth (Oxford, 2003).

² C. W. Fornara, *The Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Berkeley, 1983), ix.

³ Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 5; unless noted otherwise, all translations are from the texts listed in the Bibliography, Ancient Sources and Translations.

narration of the Persian Wars. "Then," he says, "came Thucydides."⁴ Considering much of what his predecessor accomplished as "trifling, petty, and of little value," Thucydides selected a single monumental event, and he was "most careful of the truth."⁵

This ancient schema, held to be credible until this last century, was rejected primarily due to its blatant teleology. It was too simple. Felix Jacoby, in the first decade of the last century, developed a model that suffered from the same neatness as that of Dionysius.⁶ His major departure from Dionysius, though, is his finding that the local Attic historians, or "Atthidographers," were a late creation in the historiological evolution,⁷ the earliest "first real Attic chronicle" published in 380 BC.⁸ This assessment has come under its share of critics and defenders.⁹ Nonetheless, the list of "subgenres" that Jacoby developed has found a lasting place in all discussions of ancient historiography. It is well worth noting his types of ancient history and their descriptions in order to illustrate the

⁴ Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 6.

⁵ Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 8.

⁶ Felix Jacoby, "Über die Entwicklung der griechischen Historiographie und den Plan einer neuen Sammlung der griechischen Historikerfragmente," *Klio* 9 (1909), 80-123; the following list and descriptions are taken from Fornara, *Nature of History* (1983) 1-46, with attribution to Jacoby's initial article. See John Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge, 1997), 1-3; Truesdell S. Brown, *The Greek Historians* (Los Angeles, 1973), 5.

⁷ Felix Jacoby, *Atthis: The Local Chronicles of Ancient Athens* (Oxford, 1949), v, 5.

⁸ Jacoby, *Atthis* (1949), 5.

⁹ D. L. Toye, "Dionysius of Halicarnassus on the First Greek Historians," *AJP* Vol. 116, No. 2. (Summer, 1995), pg. 281, is a fine example of agreeing with Jacoby with regard to the beginnings of local history while at the same time arguing that Jacoby misread Polybius! See Arnaldo Momigliano, "Tradition and the Classical Historian," *History and Theory* 11 (1972), 287-288. This question will not be dealt with to any extent herein.

types of writings that contributed to the craft of the historians discussed here.¹⁰

1. Genealogy records the heroic tradition, seeking to bring consistency to often conflicting data of legend, myth and origins.
2. Ethnography describes foreign lands and peoples, aiming to present a broad description of a group of people, their customs and way of life.
3. History narrates, separately or together, contemporary and non-contemporary events. This type includes monographs and memoirs.
4. Chronography provides a system of reckoning time on an international level rather than the local levels, which are typically systematized in reference to kings or magistrates.
5. Horography records the year-by-year life of a particular city-state or nation.

Jacoby saw these different parts as connecting in time to each succeeding piece leading to a “perfected” historiography.¹¹ It is helpful to note that, whatever the line of progress, the practitioners of these “subgenres” were significant in the historical development.¹² These elements will be discussed more completely in Chapter I.

Modern approaches to ancient historiography have distilled of late into two postures: first, that the ancient histories are reliable to the extent that they are repositories of truth to the best abilities of the writer, and second, that the truth

¹⁰ Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 8.

¹¹ John Marincola, *Greek Historians* (Oxford: 2001), 2.

¹² Jacoby, *Atthis* (1949), 216, says that “contemporary history” started with Thucydides; for Marincola, *Greek Historians* (2001), 4-7, it is Herodotus; for J. B. Bury, *The Ancient Greek Historians* (New York: 1909), 17-18, it is Hecataeus.

ancient historians were in search of was the “truth” of fiction and poetry, that their histories are simply works of literature with attendant structures and themes.¹³

The former position is closer to the normative approach that modern scholars take regarding the ancient historians, convinced that the ancients were in search of facts and that their “truth” was interpreted with fidelity to actual events. Such activity is the discipline and genius of the great ancient Greek and Latin historians. There is much to credit in this approach as an example from Thucydides illustrates. He complains that people will generally hold fast to traditions without applying critical tests.¹⁴ The Athenians commemorated the killing of Hipparchus by Harmodius and Aristogiton in the sixth century BC as the first step in the eventual overthrow of Pisistratid tyranny. Thucydides, basing his conclusions on personal examination of a pillar placed in the Acropolis, determines that Hipparchus was not the tyrant of Athens after all, but his brother Hippias, the oldest son and heir of their father Pisistratus.¹⁵ More circumstantial evidence leads him to conclude that the murder had nothing to do with the overthrow of tyranny, but was the result of a love affair gone awry. Simply put, Thucydides looked at the tradition, inquired into the available evidence, and interpreted the actual truth of the matters, keeping his conclusions in line with the undeniable facts. These two elements are critical in the use of these writers of ancient history: that they have their facts straight, and that their conclusions are

¹³ John Marincola, *Greek Historians* (2001), 4-7; cf. K. J. Dover, “Thucydides ‘as History’ and ‘as Literature’,” *History and Theory* 22 (1983), 54-63.

¹⁴ Thuc. 1.20.1.

¹⁵ Thuc. 6.53-59.

believable.

The latter position interprets the ancient works with a concern of what is seen as rhetoric of exaggeration, invention of speeches and other historical details, a pleasant and agreeable narrative, and a commitment to structure and themes less conducive to history writing than other works of literature. These are all valid points and they all contribute to the difficulty that the modern scholar has when gathering from the ancients matters of fact and truth. Efforts have been made to reconcile these positions without any hope of amicable settlement.¹⁶

Without exception, each of the ancient writers named above prefaced his work with a comment on his effort to come to the truth. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, for example, speaking of the responsibility of the writer of history, emphasizes that truth is “the source of both prudence and wisdom.”¹⁷ This question of the ancient attitudes toward the meaning of truth, remarked upon throughout this thesis, needs to be addressed in one place, rather than in bits and pieces.

In his seminal paper, “Myth Memory, and History,” M.I. Finley states that truth, in the essence of “how things really were,” “was neither an important consideration nor a claim” that the ancient Greeks could confirm.¹⁸ He makes a

¹⁶ A. J. Woodman, *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography: Four Studies* (London and Sydney: 1988), 198-199. Again, Marincola, *Greek Historians* (2001), 7, states that the positions are “not easily reconciled,” and while he says he will not attempt a compromise of the two positions, he believes, “they can, of course, be nuanced.”

¹⁷ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.2.

¹⁸ M. I. Finley. “Myth, Memory, and History,” *History and Theory*, Vol. 4, No. 3. (1965), 299.

good point in his typical polemical way.¹⁹ The Greeks accepted the mythic tradition as being grounded in hard fact, and through the epics of Homer and the later works of Hesiod this mythic tradition was not only transmitted but also created.²⁰ The ancient distinction between mythology and what later became history was thin.²¹ That Roman tradition is quite similar is illustrated in the early books of Livy's *History*. In his cogent appraisal, Finley rightly states that the poets had taken care of the heroic past, and though largely oral, these explanations were entirely sufficient for historical self-interpretation.²² Truth, to a large extent, would have irreparably damaged the identity of who the Greeks thought they were. Indeed, Thucydides' efforts to correct past misconceptions regarding the murder of Hipparchus did not meet with complete acceptance in antiquity; traditions, rather than facts, were more in line with the Athenian image of self, as they were with many of the Roman historians.²³

There is also a sense in ancient history that can irritate the modern reader, illustrated in a compliment Cicero made regarding Xenophon's description of Cyrus, the pretender to the Persian throne: Cyrus was portrayed "not according to historical truth but as the image of a just ruler."²⁴ In addition to

¹⁹ E.g., "This essay has a pervasively critical tone, which is neither accidental nor 'unconscious'," is the first sentence of another essay, M. I. Finley, "Generalizations in Ancient History," *The Use and Abuse of History* (New York: 1971), 60.

²⁰ Finley, "Myth, Memory, and History" (1965), 283, 295.

²¹ Chester Starr, *The Awakening of the Greek Historical Spirit* (New York: 1968), 7-8.

²² Finley, "Myth, Memory, and History" (1965), 283.

²³ Finley, "Myth, Memory, and History" (1965), 299; cf. Jacoby, *Atthis* (1949), 152-68.

²⁴ Woodman, *Rhetoric* (1988), 94.

this bruising of the true events, most of the works by the historians under consideration here were meant to be to be read aloud. Behind each of these works is the skill of the orator. All of these writers were experienced in politics and all, especially the Romans, were schooled in the rhetorical skills of the times. This can be unsettling to someone who is trying to determine the veracity of a passage. The talent for rhetoric will hopefully make the reading of or listening to a history more enjoyable, but as any attorney will confirm, while the presentation will be delivered in a style equal to or greater than the material, the power of the rhetoric cannot but help distort the unrefined information to be related.²⁵

The effort to convince, which is the historian's aim, will alone alter "how things really were." Add to this the writer's political agenda or the didactic aspect of his work, and the deliberative writing will force the narrative to the opposite end of the scale from truth.²⁶ That the ancients were aware of this is evident in their protestations, or at least in their stated desires to be impartial. Cicero is emphatic, in the form of rhetorical questions, that truth is impartiality:

For who does not know history's first law (*primam esse historiae legem*) to be that an author must not dare to tell anything but the truth? And its second that he must make bold to tell the whole truth? That there must be no suggestion of partiality (*gratia*) anywhere in his writings? Nor of malice (*simulatas*)? Cic. *De. or.* 2.62.3-6

In his revealing letter to Lucceius, hopeful of a favorable treatment of his consulship, Cicero asks the historian to disregard these laws in favor of partiality:

And so I again and again ask you outright, both to praise those actions of

²⁵ T. P. Wiseman, *Clio's Cosmetics: Three Studies in Greco-Roman Literature* (Leicester: 1979), 38.

²⁶ Woodman, *Rhetoric* (1988), 94.

mine in warmer terms than you perhaps feel, and that respect to neglect (*neglegas*) the laws of history (*leges historiae*)...yield to your affection for me a little more that truth (*veritas*) shall justify. Cic. *Fam.* 5.12.3.²⁷

Sallust says that truth is in the writer unaffected by ambition, fear, or partisan politics: "I determined to write...as my mind was uninfluenced by hope, fear, or political partisanship. I shall accordingly give a brief account, with as much truth as I can."²⁸ Tacitus believes that the writer must be void of love or hate: "But those who profess inviolable truthfulness (*incorruptam fidem*) must speak of all without partiality (*neque amore*) and without hatred (*sine odio*)."²⁹

These definitions by modern standards are clearly naïve. For the ancients, they proved to be impossible standards: all of the Latin historians wrote politically and from a moral position;³⁰ the Greeks, moreover, the inventors of Western history, had the need to convince their listeners and readers of the benefits and worth of a new genre.

²⁷ This is perhaps unfair on my part. B. L. Ullman, "History and Tragedy," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 73, (1942), pp. 45, 53, argues that Cicero only made available to himself the convention of the time, that a monograph departed from a general history in that the former allowed for rhetorical treatment, serving *delectatio* (i.e., delight or pleasure) rather than *veritas* or *utilitas*.

²⁸ Sall. *Cat.* 4.2-3.

²⁹ Tac. *Hist.* 1.1.3.

³⁰ Ronald Mellor, *The Roman Historians* (New York: 1999), 198-199.

CHAPTER I

HISTORY BEFORE THUCYDIDES

The great epic poet Homer employed at least two elements that were included in the works of the ancient historians; Homer told a story in a narrative of events and the dominant theme of his narrative was war.³¹ Moses F. Finley observed that Homer's works embrace the "germ of historical attitude."³² It is the same historical attitude that prevailed in all of the great Greek and most of the Roman historians, Homer included in his narrative speeches of the actors and a fundamental picture of time moving from one moment to the next to the final end of his story. He did this with a sense of the visual, a story that was enjoyed, anticipatory, and recreated in a way to give the listener an experience of being there. To the Greeks, the epics of Homer were history in that they offered an ancestral relationship to their present. Finley states that, given that it lacked a scheme of dating, "whatever else it may have been, the epic was not history."³³ Homer, however, strongly influenced what came to be history in the way in which he cast the epics. Along with a narrative of events, there were speeches, a recreation of a time past that was given an immediate present, and a description

³¹ T. J. Luce, *The Greek Historians* (London and New York: 1997), 3.

³² Finley, "Myth, Memory, and History" (1965), 284.

³³ Finley, "Myth, Memory, and History" (1965), 284.

of peoples Greek and foreign.

Before the “birth” of history with in the works of Herodotus and Thucydides, however, there were other efforts. “History” as a genre had a number of founders, not solely Herodotus, the Father of History, or Thucydides, to some, the Father of “Modern or Scientific” History. Homer’s near contemporary Hesiod, also writing in verse, sorted out the unreasonable contradictory data of legend and myth, origins, genealogies, and chronology in his *Theogony*. The fragments of the *Genealogies* of Hecataeus of Miletus (*fl.* late sixth-early fifth c. BC) illustrate a rationalizing approach.³⁴ His famous opening words to this prose work underscore this interpretation: “What I write here is the account that I considered to be true. For the stories of the Greeks are numerous and, in my opinion, ridiculous.”³⁵ The difficulty in letting go of the past and those attitudes that the Greeks had for the times of myth, legend, and heroes is evident, nonetheless, in his recounting fabulous stories and even tracing his own genealogy back sixteen generations to the gods.³⁶ To Hecataeus’ original work in mythography, genealogy and geography, Herodotus owed an obvious heavy debt that was not acknowledged.³⁷ Hecataeus’ principal achievement was

³⁴ Jacoby, *Atthis* (1949), 68, considers Hecataeus “the father of Greek historiography,” Brown, *The Greek Historians* (1973), 7, considers him to be the “most important” prose writer before Herodotus.

³⁵ Bury, *Greek Historians* (1909), 13, translation of *FGrH*. 1F1 in Felix Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, Vol. 1 (Leiden: 1950).

³⁶ Hdt. 2.143; Fornara, *Nature of History* (1983), 5, notes, for example, Hecataeus telling of “a vine springing from the blood of a dog” and a “talking ram.”

³⁷ Bury, *Greek Historians* (1909), 49-50.

beginning what might be considered the historical process.³⁸

Homer did not display an interest in or even an awareness of chronology. He offered no sense that events could be located in time other than something before or something after. His characters do have an awareness of the past: Achilles sings of famous deeds of even older heroes; Helen weaves a self-pitying tapestry of the sufferings of Troy since the beginning of the war.³⁹ However, the heroes of his epic, and in general of all epic poetry, are essentially timeless. When Odysseus returns to Ithaca after almost twenty years absence, aided by Athena, he must disguise his features; his physical appearance has not changed for all his physical trials or even from aging two decades.⁴⁰ In his famous first chapter of the *Mimesis*, "Odysseus' Scar," Erich Auerbach addresses this Homeric timelessness when he says that there is "only present, pure and without perspective."⁴¹

Hesiod's account of man's decline from the age of gold down to the present day of iron did not have to consider a chronology; only the sequence was essential. There were no dates to be harmonized since there was no gradual sense of movement from one age to the next. His vision, as illustrated in *Works and Days*, was not one of deterioration, but one of destruction, with the

³⁸ Simon Hornblower, *Greek Historiography* (Oxford: 1994), 1.

³⁹ Hom. *Il.* 9.182-3.121.

⁴⁰ Hom. *Od.* 13.429.

⁴¹ Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis* (Garden City, New York: 1957), 9; Egbert J. Bakker, "Mimesis as Performance: Rereading Auerbach's First Chapter," *Poetics Today*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Spring, 1999), 12.

wholesale replacement of one age with another.⁴² In his process of systematizing the genealogies and making sense of the ancient stories, Hecataeus may be said to have made a demarcation between the “heroic” and the “historical” times.⁴³ Included in this process was measurement of time in generations of forty years each. Herodotus continued the use of generations, altering the period to total three generations in a century.

Hellanicus of Lesbos (c. 480-395 BC) worked to construct a complete history of the Greeks.⁴⁴ His major contribution of placing events on a set chronology, a creative activity of incalculable effect, has been termed “the cornerstone” of the historical tradition of the Greeks.⁴⁵ He developed the chronology, as did Hecataeus, by the numbering of generations based on genealogies, but also utilizing the dim or traditional dates of events, magistrates and priests. His inspired method and scope of work has been termed “an ingenious edifice on foundations which had no solidity.”⁴⁶ This surely is the case, but the complementary treatment of genealogy and chronology was an achievement necessary for the breadth of his story. This was the only sense

⁴² Hes. *Op.* 110-179; Finley, “Myth, Memory, and History,” 286; cf. Frederick J. Taggart. “The Argument of Hesiod’s *Works and Days*,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Jan, 1947), pp. 50-57.

⁴³ Fornara, *Nature of History* (1983), 4-5, calls this moment “epoch making;” cf. Arnaldo Momigliano, *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography* (Middletown: 1977), 163. Of course Homer recognized the difference between these heroes and the men in his day.

⁴⁴ Philip Edward Harding, “Hellanicus,” *OCD*³, 677; Hellanicus wrote a number of works of mythography, of which only some 200 fragments survive.

⁴⁵ Bury, *Greek Historians* (1909), 27.

⁴⁶ Bury, *Greek Historians* (1909), 30, evidently speaking for Hellanicus. It is worth recalling the medieval scholiast’s comment to *FGrH* 4, 323a: “*is est satis mihi.*”

chronology offered for those years before 650 BC or even 550 BC; these years are a jumble of fact and fiction.⁴⁷

When Hellanicus first published his works is questionable,⁴⁸ but there were certainly profound developments that influenced the scope of his writing and those of subsequent historians. By the mid-fifth century there was a cessation of hostilities with Persia, and contact was restored with the East,⁴⁹ and with the Athenian tragedians devoting their work to treatment of mythological themes, the prose writers looked for new and unique topics. The rationalist questions and answers emanating from the conversations of Ionian philosophy complemented these other developments to the point that prose treatment of myths and legends was starting to decline or at the very least be given a hard look. Indeed Hellanicus may have started his career as a mythographer but late in life turned to ethnography.⁵⁰

If there is any continuator in the spirit of Homer it would of course be Herodotus. Relative to his place in historiography, it has been said in a famous tautology, "There was no Herodotus before Herodotus."⁵¹ Employing prose rather

⁴⁷ Finley, "Myth, Memory, and History" (1965), 287; Hornblower, *Greek Historiography* (1994), 10, regarding Hellanicus and the first story of the Trojan Aeneas founding Rome, says, "We are now in an area where myth and history, 'true' and 'false' history, overlap."

⁴⁸ Lionel Pearson, *Early Ionian Historians* (Oxford: 1939), 152-155, 226, reviews the debate on the publication dates for his work. They typically range from 456 to 423, and some to later than 406.

⁴⁹ Diod. Sic. 12.4; Lionel Pearson, *The Local Historians of Attica* (Philadelphia: 1942), 5-6.

⁵⁰ Pearson, *Historians of Attica* (1942), 4.

⁵¹ Arnaldo Momigliano, "The Place of Herodotus in the History of Historiography," *Studies in Historiography* (London: 1966), 129; Peter Green, "The Great Marathon Man," *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. 55, No. 8 (May 15, 2008), 2, states "His greatest debt was undoubtedly to Homer, who showed him how to manage characterization, speeches, the manipulation of time

than verse, Herodotus included in the main, the historical elements of Homer. This being so, much academic effort has been expended as to the impulses Herodotus may have had in embarking on the *Histories*.⁵² While it is fortunate that his is one work of ancient Greece that has survived in complete form, nowhere in the total work does he offer anything but the minimum of information as to its genesis. His celebrated Proem, a preface of less than four lines, states a general purpose:

Herodotus of Halicarnassus here presents his research so that human events do not fade with time. May the great and wonderful deeds – some brought forth by the Hellenes, others by the barbarians – not go unsung; as well as the causes that led them to make war on each other. Hdt. "Proem"

In a sense, Thucydides says the same thing at the beginning of his history, but before Thucydides there was Herodotus. The conventional answer, and not without merit, was that with the advent of Ionian philosophy and its bent toward skepticism, came this inclination toward inquiry,⁵³ which initially defined the Greek word *historia*.⁵⁴ Skepticism in one area, be it about the gods or the makeup of the world, would certainly lead to skepticism in other areas and,

sequences, and vivid description, and also gave him his first great theme, that of recording great deeds for posterity."

⁵² E.g., Bury, *Greek Historians* (1909), 39; Brown, *The Greek Historians* (1973), 28-37; Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Berkeley: 1990), 34-39; Chester G. Starr, *The Awakening of the Greek Historical Spirit* (New York: 1986) 10-11, 132-136.

⁵³ Finley, "Myth, Memory, and History" (1965), 299.

⁵⁴ It is interesting that the first literary use of the word "history" is from Homer's *Iliad*, 18.497-508, in the description of Achilles' shield. A portion of the shield portrays an arbitration or inquiry into charges and grievances between two men "wrangling about the blood-price for a man who had died." (498) Between the men stood the *istor*, the arbitrator, "a wise man, one who knows right, a judge." Translations for *istor* are in H. G. Liddell and Robert Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: 1994), pg. 385. That Herodotus uses the word is additionally appropriate in his inquiry into causation, which involves in part death, blame, abduction, and guilt. His treatment of causation will be developed below.

reasonably, to an inquiry into the past. The pre-Socratics of the early fifth century often rejected traditional beliefs, and they were fascinated by the phenomenon of changes in nature, people and nations.⁵⁵ Another force for the advent of historical prose was that politics now functioned as the most critical and important social activity.⁵⁶ The Greek *polis*, especially Athens, offered continuity to its citizens. The continuity of the “political” structure and its parts, required at the very least a specific awareness of its past and a general awareness of the past itself.⁵⁷ The Homeric tradition gave to all the Greeks a general consciousness in a mythopoeic sense. The innovations of Herodotus offered historical narrative and explanation of a past that was at once human and secular, and most particularly, political.⁵⁸

Together, all of these influences however do not necessitate the critical moment for Herodotus. Thales, the first Ionian philosopher of record, was born in the mid-seventh century, and Athens began to flourish under the Pisistratids in the second half of the sixth century. The notions of inquiry, skepticism and politics had long been in existence before Herodotus started on his history sometime around the middle of the fifth century.⁵⁹ The particular “human events”

⁵⁵ Luce, *Greek Historians* (1997), 8.

⁵⁶ Finley, “Myth, Memory, and History” (1965), 300.

⁵⁷ J.G.A. Pocock, “The Origins of Study of the Past: A Comparative Approach,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Jan., 1962), 212.

⁵⁸ Finley, “Myth, Memory, and History” (1965), 300.

⁵⁹ John P.A. Gould, “Herodotus,” *OCD*³, 696, says while it is impossible to determine when Herodotus wrote the *Histories*, the work was familiar in Athens by the time of Aristophanes’ *Achaeans* in 425 BC, which included a parody of Herodotus’ opening chapters. This would make Herodotus a contemporary of Hellanicus rather than a follower.

about which Herodotus writes so that they “do not fade with time” are the events surrounding the Persian Wars of 490 and 480-479 BC. The work has been appropriately termed a “monster text.”⁶⁰ It is a combination of fantastic disturbances of time and place, infusions of legend, folktale and saga, and often frequented with the occasional insufferable digression seldom with excuse or motive. These excursions can vary in length from a few lines to many chapters. It is a seeming attempt to combine all knowledge into one massive work, to include geography, science, anthropology, philosophy and theology, history proper being a small part.⁶¹

The work of historical writing has its conception in thought. Any approach Herodotus took to his work can be reduced to a couple of options. Either Herodotus conceived the work as a whole, or he embarked on a less grand scheme and subsequently expanded it to include all the parts of the final product.⁶² It is possible that he recognized that the ethnographic information he had gathered in the form of travelogues could be integrated into a larger scheme. The theory that his ethnographic work was an access to an historical narrative would explain well many of the excursions that are stand-alone narratives.⁶³

⁶⁰ Donald Lateiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus* (Toronto: 1989), 13.

⁶¹ Joseph Wells, *Studies in Herodotus* (Freeport, New York: 1923), 189.

⁶² Luce, *Greek Historians* (1997), 17; if the latter is the case, Herodotus justified these excursions as supplying the background necessary to understand the conflict between Persia and the Greeks.

⁶³ Marincola, *Greek Historians* (2001), 23, does not believe this to be the case and takes exception to Lateiner, *Method of Herodotus* (1989), 145-62; *contra* to Marincola, this “snowballing” of his stories, *parataxis*, would account for bks. 6-9, likely done first and read in public in Athens and at the Olympic games. Henry R. Immerwahr. *Form and Thought in Herodotus*. Cleveland: Published for the American Philological Association (Chapel Hill, N.C.) by

Whatever the case, his work is deemed “history” not because of the ethnographic elements, but in spite of them.⁶⁴ This may appear a blasphemy to the modern historian for whom understanding, or at least descriptions, of a people’s cultural and social experience is rightly considered a necessity in the writing of history. If Herodotus had not explained or developed his story sequentially, however, he would have been remembered, possibly from extant fragments of his work, as simply another in the long line of ethnographers.⁶⁵

As indicated above, there were certain elements that contributed to the milieu of the making of the first historian: interest in geography; disappearance of the epic poet; coming of age of the *polis*; the critical analyses of philosophy; reevaluation of the mythic tradition; and, of course, the work in prose by his predecessors. To these can be added the defeat of the Persians and the Athenian pride in empire, which embraced and freed the Aegean from barbarian dominance. None of this, separately or even together, determined the leap to the invention of a new genre. It is quite possible that Herodotus, who certainly knew a good story when he saw one, should simply be taken at his word: he had a desire that the momentous events of the prior generation should not pass from memory. The passage of two millennia has proven him right; the vast majority of what we know about the Persian Wars we know from his efforts, and as the focus on politics and war has faded as the prime point of writing history, his

the Press of Western Reserve University, 1966, 79-147, offers a full analysis in his chapter “The Units of the Work.”

⁶⁴ Fornara, *Nature of History* (1983), 15.

⁶⁵ Finley, “Myth, Memory, and History” (1965), 287, states: “The intellectual linking to a chronological system was perhaps the greatest of Herodotus’ achievements.”

digressions, furthermore, have proven to be a cache for modern historians in their investigation of the ancient age.

Interest in history is more than a wonder about the past. If it were no more than that, epic poetry would be sufficient to satisfy this interest. The desire to penetrate first causes is primary in the activity of an historian.⁶⁶ Among the reasons for Herodotus' interest in history is his obvious desire to understand why and how things happen. Thucydides inquired into the cause of the Peloponnesian War; Polybius the reasons for Rome's supremacy; Sallust the collapse of the Republic; and Tacitus the emergence of imperial despotism. Among the concerns of the pre-Socratics from Thales to Democritus (b. 460-57 BC), change was a major focus of inquiry into the physical world,⁶⁷ specifically the causes regarding any significant change such as war or disease. What makes Herodotus the Father of History is his innovation to take hold of the element of the pre-Socratic causality of the sciences, discovering the interconnection of events, transferring it to a prose genre, and thereby inventing the historical narrative.⁶⁸ There is one obvious implication that cannot be

⁶⁶ Finley, "Myth, Memory, and History" (1965), 301; It is not my intention to investigate Herodotean apparent lack of concern for "the chicken or the egg" conundrum relative to cause and effect. F. R. Ankersmit, "Historiography and Postmodernism," *History and Theory*, Vol. 28, No. 2. (May, 1989), 141-142, raises the general question by quoting (without citation) Nietzsche, "If the effect is what causes the cause to become a cause, then the effect, not the cause, should be treated as the origin." Those interested in this mental abuse are referred to the source, "Against Causalism," in Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, ed. Walter Kaufmann and trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: 1967), 293-300.

⁶⁷ G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: 1964), 191, note that Heraclitus determines that all change should be regarded the result of the interaction of opposites. This is interesting in light of how Herodotus organizes the physical and cultural world.

⁶⁸ Henry R. Immerwahr. "Aspects of Historical Causation in Herodotus," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 87 (1956), 277.

overestimated: chronology in itself does not make history. Whether or not he was accurate in his connections, or the reasons why one thing succeeded something else will always be a matter of debate. This is the case with historians from ancient times to ours. What is important is that he is the first historian by whom these questions are even asked.

The Greek *aitien* is typically translated as “causes” in Herodotus’ opening line: “...as well as the *causes* that led them to make war...”⁶⁹ *Aitie*, however, does not possess the neutral connotation that the English word enjoys. The primary meaning of the Greek word is charge, accusation, guilt, or fault.⁷⁰ It is easy to frame the causes forming Herodotus’ narrative connections in his characters’ drive for revenge and vengeance. Ascribing this guilt, he begins his inquiry with two possible scenarios: the first, a series of abductions and rapes initiated by the Phoenicians, and the second, the activities of Croesus, whom he declares was the “first man to begin unjust acts against the Hellenes.”⁷¹ Both of these possibilities are framed in an aspect of injustice. His historical method, what there is of it, has indeed been described as a “judicial interrogation of witnesses.”⁷² In the *Histories*, bringing the scales back to equilibrium will prove to

⁶⁹ Hdt. Proem.

⁷⁰ In Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon* (1994), pg. 24, all of these translations for the entry *aitia*, *ê*, (*aiteô*), reference Herodotus as the primary example of use. The secondary translation of “cause” references Plato and Aristotle, as illustrated in the latter’s theory of the “four causes.” Aris. *Met.*, 994a1. Note also that the words *aitios* and *aitia* do not occur in the extant fragments of the pre-Socratics, Phillip H. Delacy, “The Problem of Causation in Plato’s Philosophy,” *Classical Philology*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Apr., 1939), 98, fn. 2.

⁷¹ Hdt. 1.5.3.

⁷² Immerwahr, “Causation in Herodotus” (1956), 276; R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: 1993), 24-25.

be not only an element of Herodotus' worldview but also a part of his method.

The elements of his historical method can be summed up in four words: *logos* (the narrative), *opsis* (sight), *historia* (inquiry), and *gnome* (thought or judgment).⁷³ His process is a narrative based on traditions of states and peoples, comprehended by him in the course of his travels and investigations, and finally drawn together through rational choice. There is, of course, controversy as to whether Herodotus traveled to all or any of the places that he says he did. Extreme positions have been taken to deny Herodotus' claims of utilizing not only written sources but also oral informants.⁷⁴ If these critics are right, Herodotus would have to be celebrated as having one of the greatest imaginations of the ancient, or any other age. While the speeches and dialogues of the *Histories* are generally recognized as free inventions,⁷⁵ it would beg logic to believe that his rich narrative was formed from only a firsthand experience of a few Aegean islands and some time spent on the Greek mainland. A feat of that dimension would be far greater than the one that Herodotus did accomplish. Arguably there were few, if any, written sources available outside logographers, the writings of Hecataeus, and perhaps writings of Hellanicus and Egyptian priest records. Not all of his oral sources were real; in addition to many of the dialogues and speeches there is enough in the *Histories* to suggest that he was not beyond fiction, but not even his strongest critics consider these inventions acts of fraud or

⁷³ Hdt. 2.99; Immerwahr, "Causation in Herodotus" (1956), 276; Momigliano, "Place of Herodotus" (1996), 129.

⁷⁴ Detlev Fehling, *Herodotus and his "Sources": Citation, Invention, and Narrative Art* (Leeds: 1990), 9, declares, "the fictive character of Herodotus' sources is beyond a reasonable doubt."

⁷⁵ Fehling, *Herodotus and his "Sources"* (1990), 175.

counterfeit.⁷⁶

The specific theme of his work was the Persian Wars; the general theme was the collision of the different cultures of the East and West and specifically of Greeks and barbarians. This world narrative, or his worldview, he developed with a sense of investigation into the causes leading to the final confrontations between the Greeks and Persians. The patterns of greed and vengeance Herodotus chose as the primary motivations.⁷⁷ In the mix of these equally weighted psychological activities, his narrative is structured with the same balance and order that he found in the world about him. It is notable that Herodotus succumbs to the same hazard that some modern historians will experience. The historian, who has a predisposition toward life patterns, is likely to discover and sometimes invent them. Herodotus illustrated mirror opposites of southern Egypt and northern Scythia⁷⁸ and also in the alignments of the Danube and the Nile.⁷⁹ He concluded that if creatures that are weak and timid have many offspring, then it must follow that the savage and predatory have few;⁸⁰ and if Hyperboreans dwell beyond the north wind, there must also be Hypernotions who dwell beyond the south wind.⁸¹ Forced and artificial, the balance and order in geography, nations, customs and nature enabled Herodotus to fashion a world

⁷⁶ Fehling, *Herodotus and his "Sources"* (1990), 11.

⁷⁷ Hornblower, *Greek Historiography* (1994), 1.

⁷⁸ Hdt. 2.5-6; 4.100.

⁷⁹ Hdt. 2.33-34.

⁸⁰ Hdt. 3.108.2.

⁸¹ Hdt. 4.36.1.

that made sense given the perceived patterns of the times and the neatness of traditional literary structures of the epic poets and contemporary dramatists.⁸² In Herodotus' eyes, it was a world dominated in all ways by symmetry, antithesis, and balance.⁸³

To be expected, the contact and collision of Greece and Persia offer the most consequential contrasts: different civilizations, cultures, characters, and political institutions; the slavery of the barbarians and the liberty of the Hellenes, oriental autocracy and Greek constitutionalism.⁸⁴ Herodotus contrasts the "hardness" and "softness" of certain peoples and is purposeful in extending this to Greece and Persia, illustrating in part a major cause for Greek victories.⁸⁵ To Xerxes' questions regarding the mettle of the Greek warrior, the exiled Spartan king, Demaratus, responds,

In Hellas, poverty is always and forever a native resident, while excellence is something acquired through intelligence and the force of strict law. It is through the exercise of this excellence that Hellas wards off both poverty and despotism. Hdt. 7.102.1

After the Persian defeat at Salamis, Xerxes flees back to Persia, leaving his son-in-law, Mardonius, to execute the final submission of the Greeks at Plataea. The generals of the victorious Greeks are entertained by the Spartan regent, Pausanias, with the laughable contrast of a Persian feast set alongside a Spartan meal:

⁸² Lateiner, 14.

⁸³ Luce, 32.

⁸⁴ Bury, *Greek Historians* (1909), 44.

⁸⁵ Luce, *Greek Historians* (1997), 57.

Men of Hellas, I have brought you here together, because I wanted to show you what an idiot the leader of the Medes was. This was his lifestyle, but he came to us, who have this miserable way of life, in order to deprive us of it. Hdt. 9.82.3

The balance that Herodotus perceived in the physical and ethnographic world he clearly saw illustrated in the opposing forces in the political sphere. The later historians of Greece and Rome hardly came close to matching the breadth of Herodotus' worldview.⁸⁶ The later historians were content to narrate a chauvinistic parochialism of their own people, with some knowledge and little interest in foreign peoples. Doubtless, it is because of this that Herodotus is accused of being a "barbarophile," a charge expanded by Plutarch (before 50- after 124 AD) five hundred years later in *The Malice of Herodotus*.⁸⁷

The order that Herodotus perceived in the world, that order which when put out of balance is rightly balanced sooner or later, is not one of a static state. As the pre-Socratics recognized changes, causes and effects, Herodotus also recognized that whatever the cosmic order, it certainly was dynamic and oftentimes irregular: "Many of those that were great long ago have become inferior, and some that are great in my own time were inferior before...human prosperity never remains constant."⁸⁸ The obvious extension of the personal level is to the "world" level. All of his balancing of the world, geography and

⁸⁶ Luce, *Greek Historians* (1997), 59.

⁸⁷ Plut. *de mal. Herod.*, 857A-858D; Simon Hornblower, "Herodotus' Influence in Antiquity," *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, eds. Carolyn Dewald and John Marincola (Cambridge: 2006), 316, notes that Plutarch rises in defense of Boeotians "on behalf of my ancestors and of the truth." Hornblower points out that the truth was secondary for Plutarch. Hornblower is nitpicking regarding the order of complaints. Momigliano, *Classical Foundations* (1990), 40, states, "Even those who admired Herodotus the most, such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Lucian, praised his style rather than his reliability."

⁸⁸ Hdt. 1.5.4.

inhabitants, allows Herodotus to perceive the great shifts of empires as either a shift to imbalance or a one back to order. The *Histories* can be read as an ongoing process of seeking balance between the east and the west. This is the point of the dialogue between Croesus and Solon. To measure a man, the end of the life must be an integral part of an individual's "balance."⁸⁹ Solon states, "We must look to the end of every matter to see how it will turn out. God shows many people a hint of happiness and prosperity, only to destroy them utterly later."⁹⁰ The irony of course is that Croesus is one that will be destroyed utterly after living a life of great prosperity. There is an ironic element in the defeat of two massive Persian forces by the Greeks, just as there is the destruction of Croesus by Cyrus, the Persian king.

Since Herodotus can order the universe, he certainly can write the script. It is this "writing of the script" that should close these main considerations of Herodotus' role in ancient historiography.

Greek tragedy was born during the tyranny of Pisistratus in the sixth century and reached its maturity during the time of Herodotus.⁹¹ In his *Poetica*, Aristotle (384-322 BC) distinguishes between poetry, including tragedy, and history. For the student of history, it is unfortunate that he defines the elements of history only in the negative, i.e., the reasons why history is not poetry. Elements

⁸⁹ Immerwahr, *Form and Thought in Herodotus* (1966), 157.

⁹⁰ Hdt. 1.32.9.

⁹¹ The three celebrated tragic dramatists, Aeschylus (?525/4-456/5), Sophocles (490s-406), and Euripides (480s-406), produced their greatest works between 484 (Aeschylus' first win in the City Dionisia) and 406. It is unknown when Herodotus started or completed his work; the first ancient reference to it, as noted above, is in 425.

of his claims help to place Herodotus in the creative milieu of the Greek fifth century.⁹² A cursory list of poetic essentials illustrates this:

1. Poets imitate the actions of men.⁹³
2. A tragic work imitates these actions, which having some magnitude will evoke pity, fear, and in the end produce a catharsis.⁹⁴
3. The poet deals with universals.⁹⁵
4. Action or plot (arrangements of incidents) is the most essential element in tragedy.⁹⁶
5. Other elements essential to the poet are development of character, expression of thought (in speech), and spectacle.⁹⁷

Aristotle, writing after the age of Greek tragic drama and after the great early historians (Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon), certainly had a vantage point for drawing distinctions between tragedy and history. While he makes a good argument for excluding historians from the rank of poets, he is not convincing about the absence of the dramatic in the ancient historian, especially Herodotus.

Modern scholars have noted there is much in Herodotus (including some of the above elements) that would associate his work with dramatic and tragic

⁹² Ullman, "History and Tragedy" (1942), 25-26.

⁹³ Arist. *Poet.* 1.1448a1.

⁹⁴ Arist. *Poet.* 6.1149b27; 1450a1.5ff.

⁹⁵ Arist. *Poet.* 9.1451a37-1451b10.

⁹⁶ Arist. *Poet.* 9.1451b27.

⁹⁷ Arist. *Poet.* 15. 1454a14-1454b15.

fundamentals. A short catalog of these includes:⁹⁸

1. Phrases and comparable material drawing from the tragic poets.
2. The use of the mythical and historical past in an effort to transcend the moment of the narrative in order to achieve a universal illustration.
3. The employment of tragic literary technique in order to “dramatize” the history with speeches, conversations, vividness of description, and sensationalism.
4. Most significantly, the use of tragic themes: unavoidable fate, the labors of the divine, tragic cycles, vulnerability to time and change, curses, dreams, oracles, tragic discoveries, and tragic advisors.

The purpose of these lists is not to question the “historical” in Herodotus’ work, but rather to illustrate how contemporary dramatic innovations surely influenced his creation. Added to the past influences of the epic, mythography, genealogy, ethnography, chronography, and horography, were these tragic elements. It is difficult if not impossible to imagine the birth of history in any other mix; Herodotus created the genre of history not out of thin air but out of the prevailing atmosphere. From this point, at least with the benefit of hindsight, begins an inexhaustible debate on what history is and how it should be written. It is an accident in time that the “alternative” as to the “what” and the “how” should immediately appear in equal brilliance and genius.

⁹⁸ What follows is illustrated in Suzanne Said, “Herodotus and Tragedy,” *Brill’s Companion to Herodotus*, eds. Egbert J. Bakker, *et al.* (Leiden and Boston: 2002), 117-120. She says, “I shall attempt to assess the true impact of tragedy on Herodotus’ vision of the working of human life—an impact which has been taken for granted by too many scholars.” (119). She is mistaken but at the same time helpful in collecting the evidence.

CHAPTER II

THUCYDIDES' INNOVATIONS IN METHOD AND NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE

To borrow the dialectic of Plato, if the Herodotean method was the thesis of how "history" should be written, the antithesis was the Thucydidean method. The efforts toward synthesis have been incendiary at times and until the nineteenth century advent of the "scientific" approach to history, it was unresolved. Even this seeming conclusion was problematic with new twentieth century methods, which advanced questions of what historical certainty was and raised doubts whether such a thing even exists.⁹⁹ For Thucydides, however, historical certainty was affirmed through a precise method.¹⁰⁰

It is almost impossible to consider the works of Herodotus and Thucydides without contrasting their approaches to writing history. The great intellectual exercise, mentioned at the end of the last chapter, can be appreciated as one of preference and inclination.¹⁰¹ The nascent beginning of the conflict between the two methods was partly one of Thucydides' own making, though it is doubtful that

⁹⁹ W. R. Connor, "A Post Modernist Thucydides?" *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 72, No. 4 (Apr. - May, 1977), 289-298, reviews these changes in attitude. These attitudes are not new and are reflected in F. M. Cornford, *Thucydides Mythistoricus* (London: 1907) and more recently Virginia J. Hunter, *Thucydides: The Artful Reporter* (Toronto: 1973).

¹⁰⁰ Momigliano, *Classical Foundations* (1990), 40.

¹⁰¹ Marincola, *Greek Historians* (2001), 62.

subsequent historiographers needed any help to initiate the conversation. In his first book Thucydides states that his work is not motivated to bring applause nor would it likely please those who were entertained through “romance.”¹⁰² The purpose of his work was to leave a record of what happened and to explain the causes.¹⁰³

In Book Two the war begins.¹⁰⁴ The whole of the *History* before this point is an introduction. The introduction is explicit in an explanation of what his method will be and probably more important, it offers some idea as to how he will proceed. The nature of his narrative in this section deserves close attention. Included in Book One is an explanation of his treatment of speeches and events. This too will be examined. After these considerations remarks will be directed at Thucydides’ over-all style and the form of the narrative.

One of the major complaints against Thucydides is that, unlike Herodotus, Thucydides gives us his version of events without explanation of his conclusions.¹⁰⁵ This is indeed the case in most of his work. There is one major exception. The Archaeology,¹⁰⁶ so-called because it is a historical treatment of primitive Greece to the rise of the great city-states,¹⁰⁷ offers a glimpse of his

¹⁰² Thuc. 1.22.4.

¹⁰³ Thuc. 1.23.5-6.

¹⁰⁴ Thucydides’ work is, of course, incomplete. It breaks off in mid-sentence in the twenty-first year of the war in 411. The war ends in 404, in its twenty-eighth year. The circumstances of the abrupt end of Thucydides narrative are treated in the “Epilogue” of this thesis.

¹⁰⁵ Brown, *Greek Historians* (1973), 49.

¹⁰⁶ Thuc. 1.2-20.

¹⁰⁷ *archaios*, ancient or primitive; *logos*, a story or narrative; see Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon* (1994), 121, 476-477.

method. It has its difficulties, and it causes at least the number of problems that it addresses, but if this portion of Thucydides' work alone survived, the writing would be much valued.¹⁰⁸

The first lines of the *Archaeology* are a major departure from the nostalgia for the Golden Age of Homer and Hesiod. The "ancient times" were rather a time of primitive life with frequent migrations due to the overcrowding of impoverished land. There was no commerce, little cultivation, destitution of capital, and ever-present fear of invasion from other peoples.¹⁰⁹ In fact, Thucydides states,

Accordingly, Attica, from the poverty of its soil enjoying from a very remote period freedom from faction, never changed its inhabitants. And here is no minor example of my assertion that the migrations were the cause of there being no correspondent growth in other parts. Thuc. 1.2.5-6

This passage is notable in that it reports the humble beginnings of Athens and the solidarity of its people. It is also notable in that this is the first instance, and one of the few, where Thucydides makes a stated assertion regarding any element in history. His *History* is from beginning to end his own assertions of what has happened, but here he takes pains to explain what he is about and how he is going to do it.

A major reason for the *Archeology* is a defense of Thucydides' claim that the Peloponnesian War was "more worthy" in the telling than any "that preceded it."¹¹⁰ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who has very little good to say about

Thucydides, takes him to task for belittling the past in order to emphasize the

¹⁰⁸ Bury, *Greek Historians* (1909), 102, describes the *Archaeology* as "equivalent to an independent work...amazing in its power and insight."

¹⁰⁹ Thuc. 1.2.1-2.

¹¹⁰ Thuc. 1.1.1.

present.¹¹¹ From a modern reader and historian, Thucydides' statement does not elicit too much of a response.¹¹² To contemporaries of Thucydides, however, this must have required some explanation and finesse. For hundreds of years the Greeks had been steeped in the magnificence of their Greek heroes in the Trojan War and continued to hear stories from and about their "greatest generation" in the recent Persian Wars.

His finesse is evident as he first addresses the Trojan War. He accepts Homer's epic, as did Herodotus and the rest of the Greeks, along with the reality of the heroes, the expedition, and the length of the war.¹¹³ With the same information available to Herodotus, this section is revealing of Thucydides' deductive abilities. The expedition to Troy is formed not because of the personal oaths taken by the suitors of Helen, but rather the superior authority and control of Agamemnon over the rest of the Greeks.¹¹⁴ Thucydides attributes the impulses toward war less to the *arete* of the monarch and more to the requirements of the relatively powerless in favor of the strong, an abiding theme in the *History*. The length of the war, ten years, is another element that he has to address. Clearly with an eye on the ascendancy of Athens and Sparta, Thucydides has already explained the progression from isolated nomadic tribes

¹¹¹ Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 19.

¹¹² That is, the reader may consider reading the *History* and coming to his own conclusions, while the modern historian will typically make an unemotional observation, as does A.W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary of Thucydides*, vols. 1-3 (Oxford: 1945-1956), 1.119, "Note that this is truer (i.e., 'breakdown of the fabric of Greek society') if it refers to the whole war, not to the first ten years only."

¹¹³ Gomme, *Commentary* (1945), 1.112; Bury, *Greek Historians* (1909), 103-104.

¹¹⁴ Hdt. 3.10.9; Thuc. 1.9.1; Gomme, *Commentary* (1945), 1.108.

to a cooperative alliance under Agamemnon.¹¹⁵ His inferences are insightful: he is the first writer to point to the lack of an ancient monetary system, which determined the relative size of the expedition, the nature of the fighting, and the obvious lack of intensity of the Trojan War.¹¹⁶ The economic situation of the Greeks did not allow for the supply lines that were needed to sustain the continuous ten-year battle so it must have been crucial for the invading force to cultivate nearby lands and turn to piracy in order to survive on the beaches of Troy.¹¹⁷

Thucydides' treatment of the size of Agamemnon's expedition to Troy unfortunately fails at face value to convince. Most modern critics will usually overlook the following passage as an apparent lapse, or they will make allowances.¹¹⁸ Often their comments are consigned to a footnote, but his treatment of the expedition's size relates directly to Thucydides' method and gives light as to how he arrives at his conclusions, what he tells and what he determines not to tell regarding his process. For this reason, the subject will be considered here in some length.

Thucydides says,

¹¹⁵ Thuc. 1.9; Austin, *The Greek Historians* (New York: 1969), 54.

¹¹⁶ Thuc. 1.10-11; Austin, *Greek Historians* (1969), 54.

¹¹⁷ Thuc. 1.11; Gomme, *Commentary* (1945), 1.114, points out that the Athenians took few supplies on their expedition to Sicily, expecting to sustain themselves through purchase or seizure of goods, Thuc. 6.30.

¹¹⁸ E.g., Simon Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* (Oxford: 1991), I.35, has only to say that Thucydides' use of the term "poetic license" may be the first in literature, and that his averaging is an "over-rational argument"; Thomas Wiedemann, *Thucydides: The Peloponnesian War, Book I – Book II, Ch. 65* (Bristol: 1985), 16, simply considers that the "total force was not as great as the whole of Greece might be expected to mobilize" in Thucydides' time.

If we can here also accept the testimony of Homer's poems in which, without allowing for the exaggeration which a poet would feel himself licensed to employ, we can see that it was far from equaling ours... So that if we strike the average of the largest and smallest ships, the number of those who sailed will appear inconsiderable, representing as they did, the whole force of Hellas. Thuc. 1.10.3, 5.

In the "Catalogue of Ships," Homer reports that the fleet totaled just short of 1200 ships, with the Boeotian levy of 120 men per ship and the Philoctetes contingent of 50 men per ship.¹¹⁹ Using Thucydides' averaging formula, it would be a stretch to consider 100,000 men as "inconsiderable."¹²⁰ Given his commitment to accuracy, this appears to be quite a slip, which could seriously bring into question his method, and all this within 200 lines of the history's opening words. It appears to be the type of uncritical method that he has ascribed to his predecessors.¹²¹ If Dionysius did not do the math, modern historians have and some are scathing in their assessments.¹²²

It would have been easy enough for Thucydides to attack the numbers of Homer; he was certainly aware that the numbers were exaggerated. He has accurately described and offered evidence of relative the economic states of the Greeks during the time of Agamemnon and the significant growth and prosperity

¹¹⁹ Hom. Il. 2.584-862, cf. Il. 600, 817.

¹²⁰ David Cartwright, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides* (Ann Arbor: 1997), offers that this size was greater than any expedition in the whole Peloponnesian War.

¹²¹ Thuc. 1.20.3.

¹²² Virginia Hunter, *Past and Process in Herodotus and Thucydides* (Princeton: 1982), who will say only a little more positive about Thucydides than Dionysius, charges, "On the basis of Homer's figures Thucydides comes to ... a conclusion that is patently absurd and generally recognized to be so." In the next line she says that he cannot make any "systematic criticism" of Homer's figures, nor does he have a "basis on which to challenge them, certainly no new data." Hunter's conviction that Homer can be taken as the final word on this in itself appears absurd; Gomme, *Commentary* (1945), 1.114, on this point states, "Thucydides cannot in fact be acquitted of a certain inconsequence; this excursus, like most of the others, has not been fully thought out."

that the current Greek states had reached over the ancient generations, and he has already stated that the Athenians, richer and stronger, were in their optimum state of readiness for war. In the war's first year Pericles indicates that the Athenians have 300 triremes fit for service;¹²³ in the fourth year Athens has 250 triremes at sea, which Thucydides states is the largest deployment ever in the war.¹²⁴ These contrasts in relative power, along with his experience as one of Athens' ten generals, surely allowed Thucydides the ability to assess the financially impossible demands necessary to build a Homeric expedition of 1200 vessels and then the logistical nightmare of commanding and supplying 100,000 men. He could have made a strong argument dismissing Homer's figures.

Modern historians have reduced the two million men that Herodotus numbers Xerxes' invasion army during the Persian Wars to an acceptable 180,000.¹²⁵ Agamemnon and his regal fellows were neither half as rich as Xerxes nor could they possibly have had half the human resources available to the king of Persia. Cold reasoning by Thucydides would have reduced Homer's numbers to one tenth of their stated size.¹²⁶ A more logical concern is why some of his critics are quick to dismiss this portion of his narrative as "not being fully thought

¹²³ Thuc. 2.13.8.

¹²⁴ Thuc. 3.17.1-2.

¹²⁵ F. Maurice, "The Size of the Army of Xerxes in the Invasion of Greece 480 B. C." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 50, Part 2 (1930), 210-235, in his definitive paper, reviews the logistical and economic restrictions and determines that Xerxes' army could not have exceeded 180,000 men (211).

¹²⁶ Lisa Kallet-Marx, *Money, Expense, and Naval Power in Thucydides' History* 1-5.24 (Berkeley: 1993), 28-29, translates 1.11 "For due to insufficient supplies they brought a smaller army," rather than (in the Landmark edition) "And this was due not so much to scarcity of men as of money." In the former, Thucydides' emphasis is on the size of the army rather than the limited resources.

out,"¹²⁷ rather than investigating why Thucydides supported his contentions in such a reserved manner.

It has been suggested, persuasively, that there is a universal neglect in the recognition of whom Thucydides is addressing and, at the same time, losing sight of one of the main intentions of the excursus.¹²⁸ Thucydides' reasoning shows sensitivity to the poetic knowledge and foundation of his audience, while at the same time achieving the goal of emphasizing the magnitude of the war he is going to narrate.¹²⁹ It would not do him any good to lose the interest of his audience by denigrating the memory of Homer just to win a point in mathematics. His approach is a marriage of rhetoric and argument.¹³⁰ The "Catalogue of Ships" was a roll call of the great cities of ancient Greece, which doubtless the cities in his contemporary age continued to relish at the recounting.¹³¹ Thucydides knew the truth of the matter, as assuredly his audience did,¹³² but he did not need to state the hard truth and neither did his audience need to hear it. The sword of his method here, so to speak, has two edges: in order to emphasize the scale of the

¹²⁷ Gomme, *Commentary* (1945), 1.114.

¹²⁸ Nino Luraghi, "Author and Audience in Thucydides 'Archaeology,' Some Reflections," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, Vol. 100 (2000), 227-39.

¹²⁹ Roberto Nicolai, "Thucydides' Archaeology: Between Epic and Oral Traditions," *The Historian's Craft in the Age of Herodotus*, ed. Nino Luraghi (Oxford: 2001), 271, esp. fn. 18.

¹³⁰ Luraghi, "Thucydides' Archaeology" (2000), 230; Marincola, *Greek Historians* (2001), 74, rightly describes "The Archaeology" a "sophistic demonstration."

¹³¹ Gregory Crane, *Thucydides and the Ancient Simplicity: The Limits of Political Realism* (Berkeley: 1998), 133, fn. 25, emphasizes, "the Athenians took their appearance in the Catalogue very seriously."

¹³² Any argument that Thucydides rushed through this and that his audience was not able to do its sums is weak.

war he must relate it to other wars in legend and memory; at the same time he cannot be offensively explicit in the dismissal of far-fetched numbers because this would weaken his purpose.¹³³ He does the same thing when he dismisses the greatness of the Persian Wars, in that they consisted of only four battles, two on sea, two on land.¹³⁴ He does not bring up the Herodotean figures of the size of the Persian force, not because he is afraid to address them, but because they are also obviously inflated and the result would be a needless distraction to his audience. Because this portion of the first book is his argument for considering the overwhelming significance of the current war, Thucydides plainly lays out his case and the evidence. Having done so once, he does not feel the need to explain the process of his method for each subsequent narrative event or speech.

Thucydides concludes the Archaeology saying that as difficult as it is to draw evidence regarding antiquity, he has drawn proofs that are reasonable and these proofs have been “drawn upon the clearest data.”¹³⁵ He then takes a moment to discuss the speeches in his text, explaining his reasonable approach to these. The speeches¹³⁶ assuredly elicit more scholarship than anything else in his *History*,¹³⁷ and the reason for this is simply that Thucydides has set his

¹³³ Luraghi, “Thucydides’ Archaeology” (2000), 233.

¹³⁴ Thuc. 1.23.1.

¹³⁵ Thuc. 1.21.1.

¹³⁶ Victor Davis Hanson, “Introduction,” *The Landmark Thucydides*, ed. Robert B. Strassler (New York: 1996), xv, has evidently counted them; there are 141 speeches in the *History*.

¹³⁷ Marincola, *Greek Historians* (2001) 77, fn. 77, notes, “some 350 items are covered” in the bibliography of *The Speeches in Thucydides: A Collection of Original Studies with a Bibliography*,

historical method apart from that of Herodotus or of anything else prior. The speeches of Herodotus are an extension of the “artist’s manner”¹³⁸ and thus are not held to the historiographical measure or scrutiny that Thucydides is under.

Just as Thucydides’ treatment of the numbers in Homer’s catalogue submits to examination the reliability of his method, so does his explanation of the speeches in his history. The conclusions his critics have reached, as a rule, are more confusing than Thucydides’ statement itself.¹³⁹ What follows is not an attempt to rehash the debate, but to isolate what appears to be the main points of the argument and offer a reasoned observation.

The possible interpretations of the speeches are four: they are nearly verbatim, reproductions of what Thucydides either heard, read, or was told by others; they are entirely creative works with no historical foundation; they are greatly modified versions of what was probably said; or, there is no uniformity in category, and that there speeches which apply to each of the above interpretations.¹⁴⁰ Exacerbating the problem is the absence of a level playing field, so to speak, as scholars translate the following passage: translations will

ed. Philip A. Stadler (Chapel Hill: 1975). To be exact, there are 351; Professor Stadler numbered the references. Thomas F. Garrity, “Thucydides 1.22.1: Content and Form in the Speeches,” *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 119, No. 3 (Autumn, 1998), 361, says, “the interpretive problem posed by the speeches of Thucydides is one of the oldest chestnuts in classical scholarship.”

¹³⁸ A.W. Gomme, *The Greek Attitude to Poetry and History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: 1954) 100; in fact, Gomme says on the same page that Herodotus’ “poetic” manner as a creative artist is seen most easily in his speeches; see also Tad W. Guzie, “Poetic Element in Herodotus’ Speeches,” *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 7 (Apr., 1955) 326-328.

¹³⁹ John Wilson, “What Does Thucydides Claim for His Speeches?” *Phoenix*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Summer, 1982), 95.

¹⁴⁰ Hanson, “Introduction,” *Landmark Thucydides* (1996), xv.

generally align with one of the possible solutions, and, understandably, the bias of the critic/scholar/translator. This is the *Landmark* translation:¹⁴¹

With reference to the speeches in this history, some were delivered before the war began, others while it was going on; some I heard myself, others I got from various quarters; it was in all cases difficult to carry them word for word in one's memory, so my habit has been to make the speakers say what was in my opinion demanded of them by the various occasions, of course adhering as closely as possible to the general sense of what they really said. Thuc. 1.21.1.

Thucydides' next lines describe his treatment of the narrative of events. Seldom do scholars use these lines in regard to his treatment of speeches.¹⁴² It would seem, however, that while memory of words is arguably far more difficult than memory of a given event or train of events, the lines would also reveal his requirements for general historical precision:

And with reference to the narrative of events, far from permitting myself to derive it from the first source that came to hand, I did not even trust my own impressions, but it rests partly on what I saw myself, partly on what others saw for me, the accuracy of the report being always tried by the most severe and detailed tests possible. Thuc. 1.21.2.

Based on their interpretation of these passages, many scholars have concluded that Thucydides claims accuracy for the deeds or events he describes, but for the speeches, he claims something short of accuracy.¹⁴³ This simply is not what Thucydides claims for the speeches or the narrative of events.

With regard to the speeches, it is Thucydides' claim, "to make the speakers say what was in my opinion demanded of them by the various

¹⁴¹ The *Landmark Thucydides* is a "Newly Revised Edition of the Richard Crawley Translation" (from title page).

¹⁴² Gomme is significant in his departure from this, as indicated below.

¹⁴³ Clifford Orwin, "Thucydides' Contest: Thucydidean 'Methodology' in Context," *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (Summer, 1989), 353.

occasions,” that causes the most disquiet and allows scholars to distinguish between the methods and accuracy of relating events and the methods and accuracy of relating speeches. It is the “putting words in the mouth of the speakers” based on his subjectivity and that which was demanded (*ta deonta*) by the occasion that smacks of something less than the writing of history and describes something more in line with the artistic manner of Herodotus. However, A. W. Gomme stresses the essential need to understand exactly what Thucydides is claiming. He asserts that “*ta deonta* cannot mean ‘the ideal argument’.”¹⁴⁴ In other words, Thucydides is not assigning a speech to a given speaker based on his judgment of what the best argument for the speaker to present in a given circumstance.¹⁴⁵ The speeches are not invention.

Thucydides says that some of the speeches he heard, others he received in reports; he also tells us that he was present at some of the events, others he received from different sources. While his methods for dealing with speeches and events were to a degree different, that does not mean that the accuracy of the speeches were different in kind, that is, that they were not any more or less accurate than his narrative of events. The same commitment to precision that Thucydides brings to his narrative of events can be expected in his treatment of the speeches. As a final observation on this matter, which of course will never be exhausted, Donald Kagan made what seems to be a fitting comment to the

¹⁴⁴ Gomme, *Commentaries* (1948), 1.140.

¹⁴⁵ Christopher Pelling, *Literary Texts and the Greek Historian* (London and New York: 2000), 114-116, offers a remarkably evenhanded and interesting explanation of the positions of what he terms “the extreme historical accurist and the extreme free composer.”

thousands of words written on the subject: "The fact is that no one has shown that there is a single speech that could not have been given in something like its Thucydidean form."¹⁴⁶

Most of the first book of the *History* is taken up by three excurses. The first is the Archaeology (1.1-23), which challenged traditions and presented Thucydides' statements regarding method; the second is the Pentecontaetia (1.89-118), in which he makes his argument for the real causes of the war; and the last is an excursus regarding Cylon, Pausanias, and Themistocles (1.126-138), where again he corrects the accounts of previous writers.¹⁴⁷ The last portion of Book One is Pericles' first speech, in which the Athenian leaders reject Spartan demands and address the inevitability of the coming war,¹⁴⁸ whereupon, the Athenians vote and the war, for all intents, begins.¹⁴⁹

How Thucydides treats the cause of the war, which started in 431, is instructive for its contrast to Herodotus¹⁵⁰ and the lesson obviously learned by Thucydides' continuators. There are alleged causes or pretexts, which are expressed by the explanations of the participants, and then there are the real

¹⁴⁶ Donald Kagan, "The Speeches in Thucydides and the Mytilene Debate," *Yale Classical Studies* 24 (1975), 75-77; F. E. Adcock, *Thucydides and His History* (Cambridge: 1963), 28, asserts, "it is natural to assume that he does not in fact insert speeches of which he cannot have had at any rate some information."

¹⁴⁷ H. D. Westlake, *Essays on the Greek Historians and Greek History* (Manchester: 1969), 4-5. According to Westlake there are five major excurses in the *History*, the other two are 6.2-5, regarding the Greek settlement of Sicily, and 6.54-59, regarding the Pisistratid tyranny.

¹⁴⁸ Thuc. 1.141, 144.

¹⁴⁹ Thuc. 1.145-146.

¹⁵⁰ Hdt. 1.5.3, 1.87.3, where Croesus, the king of Lydia, began unjust acts against the Greeks by blaming his invasion of Persia on the god of the Greeks, Apollo. But even before this "real" cause, Herodotus gives emphasis to the various mythical or legendary abductions (Io, Europa, Medea, and Helen, 1.1-4) as the reasons for the Persian Wars.

causes, which may be unadmitted and sometimes scarcely perceived.¹⁵¹ In addition, whatever the causes, real or perceived, it is in the temporal or human experience that understanding will be forthcoming, not in the actions of the divine or in the times of legend. The divine in Herodotus is at times mysterious, but it is always present in the settling of accounts; Thucydides will on occasion refer to oracles, acts of nature, or other seemingly divine events, but their sole purpose is to illustrate the psychological effect on the actions of human participants.¹⁵² In his treatment of cause, it is central to ancient political thought that Thucydides is not making a point to blame any of the participants for the final responsibility of the war itself. There is an understandable modern inclination to “blame” Athens and its imperial expansion,¹⁵³ but Thucydides recognizes that the winning of wealth and power is part of human nature. Hermocrates, the Syracusan general praised by Thucydides, acknowledges this quality eleven years before the 413 Athenian expedition to Sicily:

That the Athenians should cherish this ambition and practice this policy is very excusable; and I do not blame those who wish to rule, but those who are too ready to serve. It is just as much in men’s nature to rule those who submit to them, as it is to resist those who molest them. Thuc. 4.61.5.

This will be a leitmotif throughout the *History*.

¹⁵¹ Austin, *The Greek Historians* (1969), 57.

¹⁵² Bury, *Greek Historians* (1909), 129. A notable example is the eclipse during the siege of Syracuse in 413 (Thuc. 7.50.4). Nicias insists that the Athenians delay their retreat from the disaster until the new moon, nearly a month later, which sealed the complete destruction of the Greek forces. Thucydides remarks that Nicias “was somewhat overaddicted to divination”; another example is the Athenian embrace of the oracle remembered during the Plague: “A Dorian war shall come and with it pestilence” (Thuc. 2.54.2-3).

¹⁵³ The obvious modern example is the inclusion of the statement in the Versailles treaty placing the sole responsibility of World War I on Germany. See also, A. Andrewes, “Thucydides on the Causes of the War,” *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Nov., 1959), 223-239, esp. 224-225.

Expressed immediate reasons for the war are various: in 433 Corinth is angered over the defensive alliance between Athens and Corcyra; in 433 Megara is excluded by decree by Athens from the use of her harbors and markets, which in turn draws Corinthian enmity; in 432 Athens takes measures against Corinthian influence in Potidaea, leading to charges and countercharges.¹⁵⁴ Complaints from allies, with Corinth the most vocal,¹⁵⁵ finally persuaded the Spartans that the breach with Athens was beyond repair. After Spartan ultimatums were rejected by Athens, diplomacy failed, and hostilities commenced.¹⁵⁶ A lesser historian, ancient or modern, would then proceed from this point to the narrative of events. What makes Thucydides remarkable, and, to modern readers, somewhat removed from his age, is his startling analysis, which he delineates at the beginning of the work.¹⁵⁷

To the question why they broke the treaty, I answer by placing first an account of the grounds of complaint and points of difference, that no one may ever have to ask the immediate cause which plunged the Hellenes into a war of such magnitude. The real cause, however, I consider to be the one which was formally most kept out of sight. The growth of the power of Athens, and the alarm which this inspired in Sparta, made war inevitable. Thuc. 1.23.5-6.

His investigation into real motives and the connections he makes are simply types of inquiry not found in Herodotus, will be feebly imitated by most of Thucydides' Greek and Latin continuators, and taken for granted by modern

¹⁵⁴ Thuc. 1.45.1, 1.55.2; 1.66; 1.139.1-2.

¹⁵⁵ Thuc. 1.120-124.

¹⁵⁶ Thuc. 2.1.

¹⁵⁷ Austin, *The Greek Historians* (1969), 65, considers Thucydides' "acute political analysis," equally with his pursuit of accuracy, his "enduring achievement."

historians. Rather than the apparent concern for the complaints of the Corinthians, the Megarians, or concern for the Corcyran oligarchs, Thucydides has distilled the cause of war to its basic elements: Athenian power and Spartan alarm. Though Sparta is assuredly aware of this basic cause, it is left unspoken; Thucydides recognizes that powerful states, in this instance Sparta, have some things that are better left unsaid and not admitted. It is this capacity as a historian, his ability to make connections, that that invites more penetrating analysis of Thucydides than of any other ancient historians.

Thucydides initiated contemporary history. Herodotus was still a youth at the end of the Persian Wars,¹⁵⁸ and to a certain extent his telling of those wars can be considered contemporary, but while his subject was in the immediate past it was also founded in the time of legend and myth. Thucydides tells us in his famous first line that he began his history of the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians "the moment it broke out." This is a remarkable undertaking. There is a comfort in writing about past events; with the separation of years, decades, or centuries, the past has at least an apparent order to it that is usually absent from present experiences. Granted, the ability to comprehend past events is connected with the benefit and security of putting things into perspective. Thucydides moved away from stories found in the epics of Homer, the histories of Herodotus and the subjects of tragic drama, and ventured, so to speak, into foreign and formidable territory.¹⁵⁹ His restriction to contemporary history

¹⁵⁸ Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 5, states that Herodotus was born "a little before the Persian Wars."

¹⁵⁹ Bernard Knox, *Word and Action: Essays on the Ancient Theater* (Baltimore and London: 1979), 8-9, notes that while Greek tragedy did not deal exclusively with the divine and was

furthermore offered a new and important idea to historiography, specifically, the recognition of the present as being something distinct from the past and inherently important on its own merits.¹⁶⁰ Thucydides chose a single moment, albeit nearly three decades in length, and did not use it, as Herodotus did, as a vehicle for wider investigations.¹⁶¹

In starting his work at the beginning of the war, Thucydides chose to write in an annalistic form, structuring his work in a year-by-year narrative, dividing the year by summer and winter, thus organizing his narrative around the rhythm of military campaigns.¹⁶² Detailing events by theaters of activity and giving a specific year to events imposed some restrictions on his narrative,¹⁶³ but it allowed him to establish palpable causal relationships.¹⁶⁴ The challenge in specifying 431 as the “first year” of the war was in itself problematic though. Each city of ancient Greece had its own reckoning as to the current year and made this determination based on individuals holding specific religious or civil positions.¹⁶⁵ In addition, the Greek calendar started in the middle of the modern

specific in its application to current attitudes and present concerns, the major portion of the genre was concerned with human and heroic myth.

¹⁶⁰ Austin, *The Greek Historians* (1969), 51.

¹⁶¹ Marincola, *Greek Historians* (2001), 65-66.

¹⁶² Thomas R. Martin, “Appendix K: Calendars and Dating Systems in Thucydides,” *Landmark Thucydides* (1996), 623-625. Thucydides’ “summer” included the modern seasons of spring, summer and fall, those seasons during which time armies and navies were active.

¹⁶³ These restrictions will be addressed momentarily.

¹⁶⁴ Marincola, *Greek Historians* (2001), 66.

¹⁶⁵ Martin, “Calendars and Dating Systems,” *Landmark Thucydides* (1996), 624, notes that it was evidently not until after the time of Thucydides that Greek Olympics were used to designate a specific year, i.e., in the third year of a specific Olympiad.

year.¹⁶⁶ Thucydides' famous, and labored, lines in which he specifies the war's first year illustrate his desire for simplicity and exactness in distinguishing subsequent years.

The Thirty Years' Peace which was entered into after the conquest of Euboea lasted fourteen years. In the fifteenth year, the forty-eighth year of the priestess-ship of Chrysis at Argos, during the ephorate of Aenesias at Sparta and in the last month but two of the archonship of Pythodorus at Athens, six months after the battle of Potidaea and just at the beginning of spring, a Theban force a little over three hundred strong, under the command of their boeotarchs, Pythangelus son of Phyleides, and Diemporus son of Ontetorides, about the first watch of the night, made an armed entry in Plataea, a city of Boeotia in alliance with Athens. Thuc. 2.2.1

There are no fewer than six dating indicators in this sentence. Utility aside, this passage demonstrates the precision that Thucydides considered necessary to his method. His annalistic form required an independent calendar, free from the sectional reckonings of the various Greek states. For all his subsequent influence, in this area alone he had no immediate or lasting impact.¹⁶⁷ Xenophon used Thucydides' annalistic reckoning but only in the first section of the *Hellenica*.

Before saying a few words about the unifying techniques that are used in Thucydides' *History*, a few more comments are requisite regarding the purpose of the work. This will assist in evaluating aspects of the former. As noted above, Thucydides states in his opening that his subject deserves attention because it

¹⁶⁶ So, a given translation may note an event happening in 414/3 for example. It does not indicate confusion as to the date, but simply is reconciling the modern calendar to the ancient Greek calendar, which typically started around June or July.

¹⁶⁷ Marincola, *Greek Historians* (2001), 66; the later Roman historians, due to the extensive Roman world, were able to use a universal calendar, *ab urbe condita*, which, interestingly, was more connected with Rome than any Greek reckoning was connected to a particular state.

“was the greatest movement yet known in history.”¹⁶⁸ *Kinesis* is usually translated as “movement.” The word also denotes to upheaval, revolution, punitive actions, movement of armies, human emotion, and stirring up. The *History* is not simply about a war that Athens should have won, neither is it simply a narrative of “movements” of armies and navies. The *History* is about the disruptive and destructive forces that once put into play, they brought about the breakdown of the ethics and morale of the heretofore-civilized Greek world.¹⁶⁹ The grim lesson, Thucydides says, is that

in peace and prosperity, cities and individuals have better sentiments, because they do not find themselves confronted with imperious necessities; but war takes away the easy supply of daily wants and so proves a rough master that brings most men's characters to a level with their fortunes. Thuc. 3.82.2.

Crawley's translation is tame and misses the point. The usual translation of *biaios didaskalos* is “violent teacher.” The master or teacher is indeed rough and violent, but war in turn teaches its students to be violent. Of the innumerable themes in the *History*, the overwhelming message is that in the sufferings of war individuals and cities are moved by events beyond their control and are beset with terrible and destructive dislocation.¹⁷⁰ Thucydides is uncharacteristically explicit in these lines, as will be illustrated in the balance of this chapter. It is his application of narrative technique that enables the reader to come to this conclusion on his own; Thucydides is merely stating the obvious lesson that the

¹⁶⁸ Thuc. 1.1.2.

¹⁶⁹ Luce, *Greek Historians* (1997), 70.

¹⁷⁰ W. Robert Connor, *Thucydides* (Princeton: 1984), 32.

reader will certainly derive on his own.

The kind of structural analysis that is done of prose work is not usually done of a work of history.¹⁷¹ Historical works are usually considered to be straightforward: the historian gathers facts and then explains these facts along with his conclusions in a narrative. There is another technique available to the historian, less explicit, in which the historian selects his material and then arranges it in a manner that creates the essential meaning or conclusions he desires. The reader accepts the assumed objectivity of the historian and is then allowed to form his own impressions regarding the narrative. The second technique is much more difficult, and the historian who is able to master this technique is more than a bearer of information. Thucydides is able to do this in a restricted annalistic form and, to a certain extent, he stands alone in this achievement.¹⁷² A close inspection of the Thucydides' work will show how its structure promotes conclusions by the reader.¹⁷³

Marincola has suggested with merit that Thucydides uses four narrative techniques that unify his *History*: juxtaposition, prefiguration and repetition, contrast and reversal, and the integration of speech and narrative.¹⁷⁴ Marincola also notes that the categories are not hard divisions, that is, elements of each of

¹⁷¹ Much of this paragraph is derived from Hunter R. Rawlings III, *The Structure of Thucydides' History* (Princeton: 1981), 3-5.

¹⁷² Structural analysis is of course inherent in the study of the ancient historians. My point is that there are, with the possible exception of Polybius, none who tell the story with the subtlety and artistry, as does Thucydides.

¹⁷³ For modern historians, subtlety is a doubtful concern when presenting conclusions. If there is any structural consideration, it is likely how the argument is presented and stated. Seldom are the modern historian's arguments and conclusions implicit.

¹⁷⁴ Marincola, *Greek Historians* (2001), 69.

these techniques are employed in the major narratives. Each of these will be covered briefly and examples will be given to illustrate the command that Thucydides has of his material in addition to the deft and sophisticated manner in which he is able to elicit from the close reader his “own” conclusions.

Prefiguration and repetitions in Thucydides can be straightforward explanations, which are either obvious in their recounting or less so, requiring the reader to work at the connections. The accounts of the plague of Athens in 430¹⁷⁵ and civil strife of Corcyra in 427¹⁷⁶ can be justly read as isolated events without concern about the narrative context. Still, both events are analogous to similar instances throughout the *History*, which Thucydides having related one, does not go into detail when instances of plague and civil war occur in other parts of his narrative. Athens had more than one bout with the plague and the *stasis* of Corcyra was repeated in different cities.

A more complex example is the relative power that a state has with the growth of its navy. In the *Archaeology* Thucydides explained the growth of Athens and the supremacy it attained in its maritime activities. Pericles, in his first speech, claimed Athens could not be defeated because Athens was supreme on the sea, while Sparta was supreme only on the land. Sparta simply does not have the capital to invest in a maritime expansion;¹⁷⁷ and “even if they were to touch the moneys at Olympia or Delphi,” and could afford the ships, he says,

¹⁷⁵ Thuc. 2.47-54.

¹⁷⁶ Thuc. 3.81.2-3.84.

¹⁷⁷ Thuc. 1.141.2-7.

they would still not be successful due to their lack of citizen-sailors.¹⁷⁸ It was, of course, through maritime expansion, with the aid of Persian gold, that Sparta was able finally to defeat Athens.¹⁷⁹ The Archaeology, in this regard, also prefigures the defeat of the Athenian expedition to Sicily. The narrative of the later event takes the reader step by step through the process: taking the advice of the Spartan Gylippus; improving ships and strategies; practicing skills at sea; and finally defeating the invading force.¹⁸⁰ The story of Athenian acquisition of maritime power is mirrored in its basic elements in the later Syracusan experience. Thucydides observes that the Syracusans “were most like the Athenians in character, and also most successful in combating them.”¹⁸¹

Just as Thucydides’ rendition of the Plague is effective in prefiguration, it serves as a violent break between the juxtaposition of both Pericles’ Funeral Speech in the winter of the war’s first year and his last speech in the summer of the second.¹⁸² Rather than a standard eulogy of the fallen,¹⁸³ the Funeral Oration is a glorification of Athens and its accomplishments: the acquisition of the empire;

¹⁷⁸ Thuc. 1.143.

¹⁷⁹ Thuc. 8.39.1

¹⁸⁰ Gylippus: Thuc. 7.21.4-5; improvements: 7.36.1-6; practice: 7.51.2; defeat of Athenian fleet: 7.52.

¹⁸¹ Thuc. 8.96.5.

¹⁸² Funeral Speech: Thuc. 2.35-46; last speech: 2.60-4. Marincola, *Greek Historians* (2001), 70, refers to the Plague description as “the central element of a triptych framed by two speeches.” The Plague occurs between the two in the early summer of the second year, Thuc. 2.47-54.

¹⁸³ Cartwright, *Commentary* (1997), 107, says “Fourth-century equivalents suggest a standard pattern for the genre, comprising an introduction; a comment on the speech as an institution; wide-ranging praise of the dead, glorifying their deeds and sacrifice; consolation of the mourners; and a dismissal.”

its form of government; the rights of the Athenian citizen; its openness to foreigners; a "school of Hellas"; and finally the Athenian commitment in the current struggle.¹⁸⁴ Experiencing the ravages of the Plague and another season of their lands being devastated by Spartan forces, the Athenians assembled to hear Pericles again. The strain of the conflict and pestilence has reduced the Athenians to despair and they vent their emotions upon Pericles.¹⁸⁵ After an initial rebuke, Pericles defends himself as a policy maker; reminds them of their vote to go to war; asserts that their only choice now is war or submission; points out that Athenian empire is a tyranny and there is danger in laying it aside; and finally that the Athenians need to cease parleying with Sparta and increase their efforts to win the war.¹⁸⁶ The most significant contrast in the two speeches is the chasm between the ideal and the real,¹⁸⁷ between the aspirations when things are going to plan and the anxieties in the midst of setback and catastrophe.

As a unit, the combination of speeches and events in the above paragraph also prefigures the events surrounding the Sicilian expedition: the splendid excitement before the expedition,¹⁸⁸ the catastrophic reversal, and finally the despair of the Athenians when they receive the report.¹⁸⁹ There is another

¹⁸⁴ Acquisition: Thuc. 2.36; government: 2.37.1; rights: 2.37.2-3; foreigners: 2.39.2; school: 2.41.1-4; commitment: 2.43.

¹⁸⁵ Thuc. 2.59.2.

¹⁸⁶ Rebuke: Thuc. 2.60.1; policy maker: 2.60.5; vote: 2.60.7; war or submission: 2.61.1; tyranny: 2.63.1; cease parleying and increase efforts: 2.64.5.

¹⁸⁷ Marincola, *Greek Historians* (2001), 70.

¹⁸⁸ Thuc. 6.31.6-6.32.

¹⁸⁹ Thuc. 8.1.1-2.

connection, namely, a resolution of conflict or denouement, so to speak. After Pericles' last speech the Athenians recognize that they do have the resources, both material and emotional, to carry on; after the initial shock of the Sicilian failure the Athenians recognize that there are resources, "such means as they had," to continue.¹⁹⁰

Contrast and reversal in the *History* is epitomized in the famous Melian Dialogue and, once again, in the Sicilian expedition. The Melian Dialogue is one of the culmination points in the entire narrative.¹⁹¹ Four years into the uneasy Peace of Nicias, the Athenians sent a fleet to the island of Melos in 416.¹⁹² The inhabitants of Melos were Dorians, as were the Spartans. Melos was the lone holdout of the Cyclades that would not join the Delian League,¹⁹³ which is say the Athenian empire. This was the source of a long suffering grievance with the Athenians, and Thucydides does not give any immediate cause for the Athenian action. After the Melians plead for justice at the outrage of being forced into the League, the Athenians respond simply, "you know as well as we do that right, as the world goes, is only in questions between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and weak suffer what they must."¹⁹⁴ In the end, the Melians

¹⁹⁰ Thuc. 8.1.3-4; W. Robert Connor, "Narrative Discourse in Thucydides," *The Greek Historians: Literature and History: Papers presented to A. E. Raubitschek*, ed. Michael Jameson (Palo Alto: 1985), 15, points out that after Sicily, funds were available also in the form of the 1000 talent emergency reserve established in 431. These funds were employed the year after the Sicilian defeat, 8.15.1.

¹⁹¹ Connor, *Thucydides* (1984), 157.

¹⁹² Thuc. 5.84.1.

¹⁹³ Donald Kagan, *The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian Expedition* (Ithaca and London: 1981), 148-150.

¹⁹⁴ Thuc. 5.89.

surrender, the men are executed, and the women and children are enslaved.¹⁹⁵

It is in the next line that Thucydides declares, "The same winter the Athenians resolved to sail again to Sicily, with a greater armament... and, if possible to conquer the island." It is in the wake of the Sicilian disaster that Thucydides portrays the essence of the contrast and reversal to the Melian experience; Nicias pleads for the lives of his men in exchange for surrender,

Saying that he was ready to agree with them on behalf of the Athenians to repay whatever money the Syracusans had spent upon the war if they would let his army go; and offered until the money was paid to give Athenians as hostages, one for every talent. Thuc. 7.83.2.

After the Athenian defeat, Nicias and Demosthenes, who had been sent to reinforce Nicias and the expedition, were "butchered";¹⁹⁶ the surviving Athenian hoplites and sailors, whom Thucydides estimates to be no fewer than seven thousand,¹⁹⁷ were sent to spend their remaining years laboring in the quarries. There is without doubt no more than a handful of scholars of Thucydides or historians of the Peloponnesian War who do not mention the contrast between the Athenian treatment of the Melians and the subsequent treatment they received from the Syracusans. Athenian *hubris* could not have been more stark or unfolded more tragically, in a flawed sense, than if the two narratives had been written by Aeschylus or Euripides. Cartwright, in his *Commentary*, notes a speech given by Nicias to his beleaguered men: "remember the surprises of war,

¹⁹⁵ Thuc. 5.116.4. Thucydides tells us that the Athenians repopulated the island with Athenian colonists.

¹⁹⁶ Thuc. 7.86.2.

¹⁹⁷ Thuc. 7.87.1, 4.

and with the hope that fortune will not be always against you.”¹⁹⁸ The Melians had made the identical argument regarding the fortunes of war: “action still preserves for us a hope that we may stand erect.”¹⁹⁹ The Athenians replied simply, “Hope, danger’s comforter, may be indulged in by those who have abundant resources.”²⁰⁰ The Athenians at Syracuse had spent their resources. There is another Melian argument, which prefigures the conclusion of the expedition and would have certainly prefigured, in high relief, the final defeat of Athens if the *History* had not been left incomplete:

You should not destroy what is our common protection, namely, the privilege of being allowed in danger to invoke what is fair and right, and even to profit by arguments not strictly valid if they can be persuasive. And you are as much interested in this as any, as your fall would be a signal for the heaviest vengeance and an example for the world to meditate upon. Thuc. 5.90.

The Athenians loosed their vengeance upon the Melians, as in turn did the Syracusans upon the Athenians. Xenophon, however, reports that the Spartans, at the war’s end, rejected Theban and Corinthian demands to destroy Athens and enslave her population, having pity on a people who had done good service to the Hellenes in the past.²⁰¹

A few more comments are required before leaving Thucydides and considering his influence on Xenophon, his other immediate continuators, and the significant Greek and Latin historians.

¹⁹⁸ Thuc. 7.61.3.

¹⁹⁹ Thuc. 5.102.

²⁰⁰ Thuc. 5.102.

²⁰¹ Xen. 2.2.20.

Herodotus has the earned reputation of being a historian of characters and personalities; his *Histories* is made up of personal relationships that intertwine and connect over the centuries, repaying good for good, and revenge for hurt.²⁰² Thucydides' primary concern is with the process of nations more so than the inspection of personalities.²⁰³ But there is more characterization in Thucydides than is typically acknowledged.²⁰⁴ There are the obvious stories that are unquestionably dominated by leading individuals who are memorable long after the *History* has been laid aside: Pericles, Archidamus, Cleon, Nicias, Demosthenes, Alcibiades, and Lysander, to name those who immediately come to mind. These stories have been termed "commander narratives" and their function, though driven by individuals, is to personalize a process that arguably does not have a life of its own but is driven by the personalities of individuals and personalities of states. It is to the states and their inhabitants that Thucydides assuredly gives his attention in study of character. There is the observable presence of city-states as characters. Corcyra, Argos, Thebes, Corinth, Melos, Megara, and Plataea, all create the impression of personality. Of course, Sparta and Athens are preeminent. The war is a clash not simply between the so-called "elephant" and the "whale" or even between oligarchy and democracy, but

²⁰² John Gould, *Herodotus* (New York: 1989), 42.

²⁰³ Marincola, *Greek Historians* (2001), 91.

²⁰⁴ Simon Hornblower, *Thucydides* (Baltimore: 1987), 57; *contra*, Cornford, *Mythohistoricus* (1907), 129, 146-147, though in line with Hornblower's criticism that the *History* is overwhelmingly influenced by drama, dismisses the portrait of Cleon for example as admittedly lean, as nothing more than an actor "on a play-bill."

between the plodding and the meticulous, and the energetic and the impulsive.²⁰⁵

Herodotus invented history when he determined to narrate and explain events in sequence and not simply report them, as had the annalists before him.²⁰⁶ His constant inclination to excurses prompted Thucydides to forsake a narrative strewn with stories of romance, and he committed to focus on the process of his subject matter.²⁰⁷ As indicated above, Thucydides initiated contemporary history. To facilitate understanding, he chose to write in annalistic format; he was the first historian to develop purposely a secular approach to causation and in the process progressed from the apparent to the real causes. He addressed the significant difficulty in obtaining correct information but was evidently successful in solving these problems.²⁰⁸ Like Herodotus, he did not simply report facts but utilized highly sophisticated unifying techniques to insure

²⁰⁵ Sparta: Thuc. 1.70; 1.84.2-3; 1.95.7; 5.105.4; 6.11.6; 8.24.4; 8.96.5. Athens: 1.70.1-9; 2.35.46; 3.37-8; 6.9.3; 6.53.2; 7.14.12; 7.21.3-4.

²⁰⁶ Fornara. *Nature of History* (Berkeley: 1983), 15.

²⁰⁷ Thuc. 1.22.4. Hornblower, *Thucydides* (1987), 197, offers a wonderful contrast, and likely unintentionally comic, between the two historians. The following excerpt from Hornblower is lengthy but so are a number of Herodotus' excurses. Hornblower notes how Thucydides narrates the Spartan attack on Acarnania in 429, and the Athenians determination to respond. "Besides which there was a hope of taking Naupactus" (2.80). Hornblower observes: "Herodotus might have handled this rather differently. Instead of the six-word sentence about Naupaktos which Thucydides gives, we might have had a retrospective digression regarding the original capture of the place by Athens in the 460s (an event obscure to us); something about the helot revolt; a mention of the dedication of the statue of Nike with perhaps an anecdote attached; an apologetic formula announcing the end of the digression; a short speech by somebody stressing the attractions, and exaggerating the size, of Zakynthos, Kephallenia and Naupaktos; and finally some resumptive words about the Peloponnesian plan against Akarnania in 429 BC, this time with a note saying, 'But events were to show that the Akarnanians were not destined to come to grief as a result of this expedition'." Very funny in his take on a difference between the two historians.

²⁰⁸ Emily Greenwood, *Thucydides and the Shaping of History* (London: 2006), 81. Greenwood devotes a chapter in her book, "New Theatres of War: Book 8 and Sophocles' *Philoctetes*," 83-108. She argues that episodes that lie behind Sophocles' *Philoctetes* accurately support the events found in Thucydides' Book 8.

not only the reader's attention but also to sustain his explanation of the war time event, and an evaluation of the same that is not always explicit.

Significant objectivity in a historian is impossible, and Thucydides has revealed enough evidence of his attitudes regarding the war and the process of its consequences. Thucydides is notable in his detachment and this contributes to a reputation of objectivity.²⁰⁹ Thucydides contributes, for example, greatly to this sense by lack of comment, explanation, or defense regarding his dismissal as *strategos* and his subsequent exile; he simply says, "It was also my fate to be an exile from my country for twenty years after my command at Amphipolis."²¹⁰ His understatement is overwhelming and causes wonder; and he brings up the fact only to stress that due to this enforced "leisure" he was able "to observe affairs more closely."²¹¹

The "scientific methodology" of the nineteenth century and its impact on Thucydidean criticisms resulted in a backlash prompting the famous publication of Cornford's *Thucydides Mythistoricus* in 1907.²¹² In short, Cornford ascribes to Thucydides all the elements that a historian must overcome: lack of causality, no sense of economic affairs, and a historical structure borrowed wholesale from

²⁰⁹ Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 50; Colin Macleod, "Thucydides and Tragedy," *Collected Essays* (Oxford: 1983), 141-158.

²¹⁰ *Thuc.* 5.26.5.

²¹¹ *Thuc.* 5.26.5. Gomme, *et al.*, *Commentary*, 4.15, translates *kath' êsuchian*, "not distracted by troubles or other activities," rather than "at leisure."

²¹² H.-P. Stahl, *Thucydides: Man's Place in History* (Oakville, Connecticut: 2003), 14, refers to *Thucydides Mythistoricus* as an "odd work."

Aeschylus.²¹³ Rather than deliver a deathblow to the Thucydidean method, it only served to illustrate Thucydides' accomplishment. Restricted as he was to the annalistic approach, Thucydides is able to attain the illusive dramatic turn with his narrative technique and still hold fast to the facts. Tragedy emerges from the actions of the war, but it is absurd to hold that his plot, so to speak, was created.

²¹³ Cornford, *Mythistoricus* (1907), 242, asserts, "This unhistoric principle of design came in on the top of his first, chronological plan, and he allowed both to shape his work." See also, Stahl, *Thucydides* (2003), 14.

CHAPTER III

THE GREEK CONTINUATORS

Thucydides' place in historiography is less evident in his immediate influence on Greek historians. This chapter will not be a full analysis of those historians who followed him, but rather a discussion of where their methods and narrative techniques are seen as a continuation of or a departure from Thucydides' work; this chapter, as a matter of recourse, will offer a general view of the tendencies of the succeeding age in historical writing. Some of the historians will illustrate elements of his methods and style; others, influenced by the sensibilities of the times, will ignore him almost completely; a few will endeavor strictly to continue his practices, but with limited success. This chapter on Greek historians will not conclude, as might be expected chronologically, with a discussion of Polybius (c. 200-c. 118). Consideration of his work will be delayed in this thesis until the final assessment of Thucydides' place in ancient historiography. The extant body of work from Thucydides to Polybius is lean and many of the historians are represented only in fragments of their histories.²¹⁴

The minds of the time immediately following Thucydides were more interested in other topics than with the new genre of history. Plato and Aristotle,

²¹⁴ Bury, *Greek Historians* (1909), 150-190, describes the age in his lecture, "The Development of Greek Historiography after Thucydides." Though a good deal has been written and discovered since his writing, it is a well-considered account and much of what follows is derived from this lecture.

for example, were more involved with, among other concerns, political science. They both wrote great works replete with actual and theoretical examples of the conduct of governance.²¹⁵ Plato, it seems, was headed toward a career in politics but abruptly moved to a more contemplative life.²¹⁶ Given that a public career proved to be a fertile ground for later historians, Thucydides himself being the exemplar, the consequence of Plato's shift may have been that the history lost to philosophy a great advocate.²¹⁷

Thucydides' immediate continuator, Xenophon of Athens (c. 430-after 354),²¹⁸ had a number of characteristics that qualified him to write a full and well-informed history. He was an Athenian, a soldier, like Plato a student of Socrates, and like Thucydides an exile. He had firsthand knowledge of Asia and the Persian Empire, lived in Sparta, Elis, and Corinth, and was a close friend to the Spartan king Agesilaus. His is the only complete history in the century after

²¹⁵ All that survives of Aristotle's collection of the constitutions of over 150 Greek states is *The Constitution of the Athenians*. His theory of the nature and function of government, derived from that collection, however, is specifically addressed in *The Politics*; Plato's is in his *Republic*.

²¹⁶ David Bostock, "Plato," *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. Ted Honderich (Oxford: 1995), 683, states, "When Socrates was condemned to death and executed in 399, Plato gave up all thought of a political career, and left Athens in disgust." This assumption is based on the famous *Seventh Letter* (ll. 324 B-325 A) of questionable and much debated provenance (e.g., Ludwig Edelstein, *Plato's Seventh Letter* [Leiden: 1966]). It is, despite its provenance, a great story, and is similar to that of the youth Thucydides weeping upon hearing Herodotus recite from his *Histories* (Marcellin. *Vit. Thuc.* 54).

²¹⁷ Bury, *Greek Historians* (1909), 151, states, "The men who might otherwise have shone as historians were engaged in speculations on the nature of the state." It might have been wishful thinking on Bury's part. *The Constitution of the Athenians* contains, in addition to the description of the constitution, a political history of Athens. P. J. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian 'Athenaion Politeia'* (Oxford: 1981) 60, observes that as a historian, Aristotle "is mediocre (though by no means useless to us), but as a describer of constitutional practice he is first in the field." It might also have been that Aristotle was more focused on the features of government to the detriment of his historical method.

²¹⁸ *OCD*³ does not offer more than general dates for Xenophon; see W. E. Higgins, *Xenophon the Athenian* (Albany: 1977), 128, 149.

Herodotus and Thucydides. Xenophon is also interesting in respect to Thucydidean influence because of the marked stylistic differences in his work. For this reason his work will be examined more closely than the works of the other historians included herein.

Xenophon's *Hellenica* can be divided into four topical sections.²¹⁹

1. Sparta's triumph over Athens in the Peloponnesian War (Xen. *Hell.* 1.1-2.24; in 411-404);
2. Installation of the Athenian Thirty Tyrants (Xen. *Hell.* 3.1; in 404) to the reinstitution of democracy (Xen. *Hell.* 2.43; in 401);
3. Spartan increase in power in the Aegean to the Peace of Antalcidas (Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.32-35 in 387/6), which abandoned the Asian Greek cities to the Persian Empire in exchange for a Spartan hegemonic position on the mainland and the Aegean islands;
4. Spartan efforts to check the rise of the Theban hegemony culminating in Sparta's final defeat in the battle of Mantinea (Xen. *Hell.* 7.5.18-25 in 362).

Xenophon makes clear in the final line of his history that he did not intend to carry the work further: "Thus far be it written by me; the events after these will perhaps be the concern of another."²²⁰

For the modern historian, Xenophon poses a number of problems, not the least of which is the opening line of his *Hellenica*. Thucydides' *History* ends not only in midnarrative, but incredibly in midsentence: "Accordingly (Tissaphernes)

²¹⁹ Ewen Lyall Bowie, "Xenophon," *OCD*³, 1629.

²²⁰ Xen. *Hell.* 7.5.27.

went first to Ephesus and offered sacrifice to Artemis..."²²¹ Xenophon picks up the narrative:

After this, not many days later, Thymochares came from Athens with a few ships; and thereupon the Lacedaemonians and the Athenians fought another naval battle, and the Lacedaemonians were victorious, under the leadership of Agesadridas. Xen. *Hell.* 1.1.1.

There is no connection with Thucydides' last lines, and in fact it is only later that Xenophon mentions Tissaphernes arriving at the Hellespont (after, Thucydides indicates, "he went first to Ephesus"), fully three battles after the one in which Xenophon opens his history.²²² The confusion is pointed out here not so much to investigate the possibilities, e.g., the absence of a more coherent opening to the *Hellenica*,²²³ but to illustrate simply the absence of any prefatory statement of purpose. Despite positions to the contrary, the opening of the *Hellenica* is as Xenophon intended; there is nothing missing.²²⁴ Without a statement of purpose or a method of continuation, the assumption must be made that he intended not only to continue Thucydides' narrative to the conclusion of the Peloponnesian War, but also to stay true to his method to the end of the *Hellenica*. In the latter

²²¹ Thuc. 8.109.1; Gomme, *et al.*, *Commentary*, 5.358, notes that the phrase is formatted, which necessarily has required completion, e.g., 1.61.2, 4.77.2. Gomme, *et al.*, *Commentary*, 5.387 fn1, advises that the additional sentence (Thuc. 8.109.2) in most modern texts, "When the winter after this summer is over the twenty-first year of this war will be completed," is universally accepted as an ancient, Byzantine, or medieval interpolation.

²²² Xen. *Hell.* 1.1.9; Gomme, *et al.*, *Commentary*, 5.439, notes that this "is a very curious point of reference for the dating." None of the battles Xenophon mentions before this are mentioned in Thucydides.

²²³ Gomme, *et al.*, *Commentary*, 5.439.

²²⁴ Malcolm MacLaren, Jr., "On the Composition of Xenophon's *Hellenica*," *AJPh*, vol. 55, No. 2 (1934), 122, correctly declares, "We are not warranted in supposing, with some scholars, that anything has been lost from the end of the eighth book of Thucydides or from the beginning of the *Hellenica*."

case, this would be an erroneous assumption, as will be illustrated below.

Xenophon incorporates the Thucydidean system by indicating the summer and winter of each year for the next seven years. The section of the *Hellenica* that completes the Thucydidean part of his narrative culminates with the tearing down of the defensive walls of Athens and the installation of the Thirty Tyrants.²²⁵ At the end of winter for each year he will note the end of one year and the beginning of the succeeding year in the very next line,²²⁶ similar to the repeating formula that Thucydides invariably used.²²⁷ That Xenophon was not comfortable with this dating method is made apparent in that he sometimes includes in his dating formulae of the Spartan Ephor and the Athenian Archon.²²⁸ Except for the demarcation of the beginning of the war, Thucydides never mentions ephors, archons, or religious leaders in fixing dates. Xenophon drops the method completely at the close of the Peloponnesian War and does not resume it again over the remaining forty-two years of his narrative. Xenophon's style in relating the last years of the war is terse, straightforward and has very few excurses; what follows is different.²²⁹ It appears that the style of this first section, the

²²⁵ Xen. *Hell.* 2.3.1-2.

²²⁶ E.g., Xen. *Hell.* 1.5.21, 1.6.1, "So the year ended..." followed immediately with "in the ensuing year..."

²²⁷ E.g., Thuc. 6.8.4, "And winter ended, and with it ended the sixteenth year of this war of which Thucydides is the historian."

²²⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 1.3.1.

²²⁹ W. P. Henry, *Greek Historical Writing* (Chicago: 1966), 14, includes the entire Book 1 and Book 2 as the first section. It is generally thought that the installation of the Thirty Tyrants (Xen. *Hell.* 2.3.1-2) to the subsequent reassertion of democracy in Athens is a separate section, or, at the least, a link between the fall of the Athenian Empire and the subsequent ascendancy of Sparta throughout the Aegean.

continuation of Thucydides' work on the war, was an effort to do justice to Thucydides, and was also, like the dating, unnatural to Xenophon. The rest of the narrative, that section after the war, has a conversational tone to it, evident in Xenophon's use of the first person singular throughout.²³⁰

Before examining the latter sections of Xenophon's narrative, it is necessary to look at one part in the first section that indicates Xenophon's ability to continue the tenor of Thucydides and thus illustrates that the subsequent departure was purposeful. There is one major speech in this section, given by Euryptolemus, in defense of the admirals after the Battle of Arginusae in 406.²³¹

Breaking the Spartan blockade of Mytilene, the Athenian fleet won a great victory at Arginusae,²³² losing only twenty-five ships to the Spartan losses of seventy-seven ships. The question at hand is either to rescue the fallen or pursue the Lacedaemonians in order to cripple further their maritime force. The decision was made to do both by splitting the fleet. In the end the Athenians were unable to engage Lacedaemonian fleet and the rescue failed due to the violence of a storm. The outraged Athenian assembly moved to put the victorious admirals

²³⁰ Vivienne Gray, *The Character of Xenophon's Hellenica* (Baltimore: 1989), addresses the difficulties with the text by asserting a unity throughout the entire work, including, remarkably, the method of dating (2). She organizes Xenophon's narrative modes as "conversationalised," "speech," and "plain." However, all of her examples (pgs. 11-64) of conversationalised narrative are *after* the conclusion of the war. She does point to Hippocrates' letter after the Spartan defeat off Cyzicus: "Ropes gone. Mindarus dead. Men starving. At a loss" (Xen. *Hell.* 1.1.23). Commenting on the Laconic brevity and dialect, she says, "Xenophon offers an early example of this conversationalised manner" (13). An interesting argument. However, it may simply be that Spartans were famously brief and they spoke in a Laconic dialect. This is no more or less "conversationalised" in its manner than what is found in Thucydides' speeches by Spartans.

²³¹ Xen. *Hell.* 1.6.15-7.35 is Xenophon's narrative of the battle and the surrounding circumstances. For a modern interpretation, see Donald Kagan, *The Fall of the Athenian Empire* (Ithaca and London: 1987), 325-53.

²³² Kagan, *The Fall* (1987), 353, notes that the battle was so critical that, if the Athenians had lost, they would have lost the war.

on capital trial for the loss of men and ships. Recognizing this as an unconstitutional action, Socrates votes against the motion, saying, “in no case would he act except in accordance with the law.”²³³ Euryptolemus, at the end of a lengthy defense, addresses the Assembly:

Do not, then, men of Athens, in the face of your victory and your good fortune, act like men who are beaten and unfortunate, nor, in the face of heaven’s visitation, show yourselves unreasonable by giving a verdict of treachery instead of helplessness, since they found themselves unable on account of the storm to do what they had been ordered to do; nay, it would be far more just for you to honour the victors with garlands than, yielding to the persuasions of wicked men, to punish them with death. *Xen. Hell.* 1.7.33

The eight admirals were condemned, and the six in Athens at the time were executed. Xenophon notes, “not long afterwards the Athenians repented.”²³⁴

The similarity to the Mytilene debate in Thucydides is obvious.²³⁵ In both, the emotional Athenians are swayed by partisan politics and calls for harsh measures: in Thucydides to firm up control of the empire, in Xenophon out of fear of defeat, which Euryptolemus insists is a specter of their imagination. In both instances they “repent” their actions. That the action is irrevocable in the latter emphasizes Euryptolemus’ argument and underscores Athenian characteristics

²³³ *Xen. Hell.* 1.7.15-16. The *prytaneis* consisted of fifty men who handled the day-to-day affairs of the Athenian state, including the arrangements for meetings of the *ekklesia*, the assembly. The *epistates*, or presiding member, was rotated daily; Xenophon says in the *Memorabilia* that Socrates was on this occasion the *epistates*; Plato says in the *Axiarchus* that after Socrates’ vote, the assembly was forced to adjourn, and the trial continued the following day with a new *epistates*. The *Hellenica* does not include this delay. For Socrates’ conduct in the proceedings, see *Pl. Ap.* 32b, [Ax] 368d-e, and *Xen. Mem.* 1.1.18, 4.4.2.

²³⁴ *Xen. Hell.* 1.7.35.

²³⁵ *Thuc.* 3.36-49.

throughout the entire war,²³⁶ illustrated in both Thucydides and Xenophon.

Of the Thucydidean narrative forms,²³⁷ there is evidence throughout Xenophon's work of the integration of speeches and narrative. This is to be expected anytime a historian introduces speeches in his work. There are, however, some instances of juxtaposition, prefiguration and repetition, or contrast and reversal. The Arginusae trial was of course a repetition of the Mytilene debate, but it was also a historical event of some importance and certainly could not have been neglected. Xenophon's treatment, nevertheless, does point to a conscious parallel with Thucydides. It can be evidence of subtlety that Xenophon did not stress the parallel, but then again, as with other narrative techniques, it is hard to imagine Thucydides' treatment of Socrates' vote in the Arginusae trial without prefiguring the latter's own trial before an emotional Assembly. Which prefiguration Xenophon chooses not to show.

So the question at hand is whether Xenophon, initially embracing the Thucydidean method, at least in part, found it too rigorous, or simply determined that it did not fit his purpose. There are four passages, all subsequent to the Peloponnesian War narrative in the *Hellenica*, which illustrate Xenophon's method, or at least his criteria in his choice of historical material.²³⁸ Taken in the order they appear in the text, they show a development of his own particular

²³⁶ Peter J. Rahn, "Xenophon's Developing Historiography," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 102, (1971), 504.

²³⁷ I.e., juxtaposition, prefiguration and repetition, contrast and reversal, and the integration of speech and narrative.

²³⁸ Rahn, "Xenophon's Historiography" (1971), 498-502, effectively argues a shift in Xenophon's historical approach. The following relies heavily on his review.

historical approach.²³⁹ They also show that Xenophon recognized established criteria of historical considerations arguably set by Herodotus and Thucydides.

The first passage comments on Theramenes' demeanor as he is led to his execution after his fall, caused by his quarrel with the extremist members of the Thirty Tyrants: Now I am not unaware of this, that these are not sayings worthy of record; still, I deem it admirable in the man that when death was close at hand, neither self-possession nor the spirit of playfulness departed from his soul.²⁴⁰ It is implicit in the narrative that he recognizes there is material "worthy of record," and that the words spoken by Theramenes are perhaps not historically important. Still, they are "admirable," and on this consideration alone they stand worthy to be recorded.

In the second passage Xenophon says,

I will now recount what happened by sea and in the cities on the coast while all these things were going on, and will describe such of the events as are worthy of record, while those which do not deserve mention I will pass over. *Xen. Hell.* 4.8.1.

Once again Xenophon is concerned with what events are "worthy of record." The direct statement that he will pass over other matters seems to indicate that he is exceptional in this portion of the narrative, that is, he recognizes there are events that under established criteria "do not deserve mention," and he will refrain, at least here, from going into them.

The third passage is even more revealing:

Now I am aware that I am not describing in these incidents any enterprise

²³⁹ The historical background to each passage will be brief since it is Xenophon's comments that are germane.

²⁴⁰ *Xen. Hell.* 2.3.56.

involving money expended or danger incurred or any memorable stratagem; and yet, by Zeus, it seems to me that it is well worth a man's while to consider what sort of conduct it was that enabled Teleutais to inspire the men he commanded with such a feeling toward himself. For to attain to this is indeed the achievement of a true man, more noteworthy than the expenditure of much money and the encountering of many dangers. Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.4.

Xenophon, for the first time in the *Hellenica*, names what he understands the "established criteria" to be: great expenditure, danger, and strategy. These are the matters of considered importance to Herodotus and emphasized with constant focus by Thucydides. At the beginning of his history Thucydides notes that the expensive preparations were completed by the two most powerful states; the war itself was replete with great strategic movements, and the ensuing disasters could not be matched in time or in number.²⁴¹ In Xenophon's history, however, these elements are not as noteworthy as the achievements of the individual who embodies the measures of what the Romans later esteemed as *gravitas* and *auctoritas*. The worth of virtue is the lesson Xenophon teaches in the sections of the *Hellenica* after the Thucydidean continuation.

This is the subject of the final passage, in which he is now emboldened not only to depart from the disembodied theories or principles, but also places himself counter to other historians and their historical traditions:

But I will speak further of them; for while all the historians make mention of the large states if they have performed any noble achievement, it seems to me that, if a state which is small has accomplished many noble deeds, it is even more fitting to set them forth. Xen. *Hell.* 7.2.1

Here he adds "the large states" to the list of great expenditure, danger, and strategy; all elements he says that are less "fitting to set them forth" when

²⁴¹ Thuc. 1.1.1-2, 1.23.1.

compared to the achievements of small and otherwise insignificant players. Xenophon is concerned with the models and examples of the great and the small, but he emphatically states that nobility and virtue are in an inverse proportion to the power and strength of the state or the individual. That is, from the great are great deeds expected; when they are performed by the less than great, then perhaps the performances are to be considered even nobler, even greater.

Xenophon's departure from Thucydides' criteria may have been the result of the discomfort or anxiety he felt in holding fast to the apparent objectivity of his predecessor. Xenophon is more comfortable in voicing his assessment of virtue and its expression in leadership.²⁴² It can also be argued that this departure happened gradually as Xenophon developed a confidence in his own narrative style and manner.²⁴³ Whatever the case, taken in its entirety, the *Hellenica* underscores Xenophon's commitment to continue Thucydides' work and he kept the first part of his narrative as close to the Thucydidean style as he was able; in the latter sections; Xenophon departed from recording only historically important events and easily allowed himself to make subjective judgments on the merits and qualities of individuals.²⁴⁴

²⁴² Rahn, "Xenophon's Historiography" (1971), 507.

²⁴³ MacLaren, Jr., "*Hellenica*," 126.

²⁴⁴ MacLaren, Jr., "*Hellenica*," 125. Thucydides' *History* was certainly not without individual characterization, as will be shown in the Epilogue, but with no more than a line or two (e.g., Themistocles, Thuc. 1.138.3; Nicias, 7.86.5; Antiphon, 8.68.1) and never in the substantial encomia that Xenophon was apt to undertake (e.g., Jason of Pherae, Xen. *Hell.* 6.1.5-6, 15-16, 6.4.22-25, 31; Teleutias, 5.1.3-4, 13-18; and of course Agesilaus, for whom any praise in the *Hellenica* was expanded in Xenophon's *Agesilaus*, which sets the tenor in its first line: "I know how difficult it is to write an appreciation of Agesilaus that shall be worthy of his virtue and glory.

It has been noted that Xenophon writes his history as if he were writing a memoir, getting his material by chance.²⁴⁵ Like Thucydides, Xenophon was an exile. Unlike Thucydides, he does not give any evidence that he used this time for historical discovery, crosschecking reports, or broadening his search for information. In fact, there is only one instance where Xenophon indicates an alternative account.²⁴⁶ In addition, the *Hellenica* has rightly earned Xenophon a reputation of being biased, careless, and obscure in factual detail. The history is replete with internal contradiction²⁴⁷ and a few examples will be sufficient to illustrate the basis of these charges.

In his description of the installation of the Thirty Tyrants at the end of the war, Xenophon omits Sparta's role, and particularly Lysander's role in the replacement of the Athenian democracy with the short-lived oligarchy.²⁴⁸ He does not use the word "tyrant," but simply states,

And this oligarchy came into being in the way hereafter described – it was voted by the people to choose thirty men to frame the ancient laws into a constitution under which to conduct the government. And the following men were chosen. Xen. *Hell.* 2.3.1

It is certain that he does not speak about Lysander's part in the revolution due to

Nevertheless the attempt must be made. For it would not be seemly that so good a man, just because of his perfection, should receive no tributes of praise, however inadequate.").

²⁴⁵ Luce. *Greek Historians* (1997), 103.

²⁴⁶ Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.7

²⁴⁷ Finley, *Greek Historians* (1959), 14, constant in his criticisms, offers a harsh verdict: "it is very unreliable, tendentious, dishonest, dreary to read, and rarely illuminating on broader issues."

²⁴⁸ The regime of the Thirty Tyrants was overthrown in May 403 and replaced by a more moderate board of Ten.

his favorable attitude towards Sparta and, in this case, Lysander.²⁴⁹ G. E. Underhill, in his *Commentary*,²⁵⁰ notes the number of events Xenophon passes over: the arrest of the democratic leaders by oligarchic clubs and the associate great internal dissensions; the call to Lysander to interrupt his siege of Samos and travel to Athens in support of the oligarchy; the means of passing of the decree to establish The Thirty; and the appointments to The Thirty by Critias and Eratosthenes (the most reactionary of the oligarchs), as well as the ten appointments by Theramenes, and the balance by the Spartan coerced assembly. The “hereafter” in Xenophon’s text does not explain anything as would be expected; the “hereafter” is simply the vote and the list of the chosen. In addition, Xenophon is silent on the subsequent extortion of citizens by members of The Thirty in exchange for their lives; the unjust executions; the forced exiles; and the outright purging of the citizenry rolls.²⁵¹ In contrast to this lack of narrative explanation, Xenophon shows no reserve in his depiction of the atrocities carried out by Corinthian democrats against the pro-Spartan oligarchs in the early stages of the Corinthian War (395-386).²⁵² These two events are obviously remarkable in illustrating his obvious bias. Xenophon’s treatment of the events illustrates a severe contrast of how Thucydides would have handled the telling of these two parallel events: he lacks the detachment of Thucydides and

²⁴⁹ Peter Krentz, *Xenophon: Hellenika I-II.3.10* (Warminster: 1989), 190; it should also be a consideration in the assessment of The Thirty that these were members of his own party.

²⁵⁰ G. E. Underhill, *A Commentary on the Hellenica of Xenophon* (Oxford: 1900), 52. All of his points are rehearsed in Lysias and Plutarch: Lys. 12.44, 12.72, 12.77, 13.28, Plut. Lys. 15.

²⁵¹ Lys. 12.8-11, 21.

²⁵² Xen. *Hell.* 4.1-3.

reveals the relative immaturity of his style.

Regarding Xenophon's concern for historical accuracy, often in the *Hellenica* an embassy or an ambassador is sent on an errand of state and then nothing again will be said of subsequent activity or negotiations.²⁵³ In other instances Xenophon will report that an individual is "again" active in a specific area without having indicated any previous visit; he will tell us that mercenaries are gathered in great haste and cost only to disappear from the history altogether; he will completely ignore famous historical battles, such as Pelopidas and the Sacred Band in Thebes' psychologically critical victory over the greater Lacedaemonian force at the Battle of Tegyra (375).²⁵⁴ All of these departures from historical accuracy have justifiably caused hesitation in using the *Hellenica* as a reliable source for the historical events of the time.²⁵⁵

As illustrated here, Xenophon's abiding interest in the *Hellenica* is not in the themes of war or the necessarily attendant rigor to detail; the wars and struggles in the *Hellenica* become vehicles through which he expresses his commitment to moral virtue. Not only do individuals but also the states possess these virtues. His bias toward Sparta blinds him to much of the obvious and as such has an unfortunate impact on the historicity of the work. There is much that recommends the *Hellenica* though. The *Hellenica* is a pleasure to read, contrary

²⁵³ Xen. *Hell.* 2.20.21. Even if there had been no succeeding activities, this should have begged some kind of comment by Xenophon.

²⁵⁴ Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.1; 7.1.27; 5.4.63-64.

²⁵⁵ In addressing Xenophon's confusing narrative regarding the siege of Corinth (Xen. *Hell.* 4.9-11), for example, Underhill, *Commentary* (1900), 136, observes, "The solution of all these difficulties is hardly possible, and in any case must involve several assumptions."

to the opinion of some critics,²⁵⁶ provided that one approaches it with fewer expectations that one might have in picking up Herodotus or Thucydides. The *Hellenica* has moments of wit²⁵⁷ and an appreciation for the ridiculous.²⁵⁸ One critic has argued that Xenophon started the *Hellenica* to describe the rise and fall of a great state, as Thucydides did.²⁵⁹ This is certainly reflected in the topical sections of the history. The fall of Sparta, in Xenophon's explanation, is part of the exemplary material that increases in frequency after the "Thucydidean" first section.

There is an interesting comment by Xenophon that is a rare instance of the prefiguration so apparent in Thucydides, though in a context different from anything in Thucydides. About midway through the work, Xenophon says, "The gods do not fail to take heed of the wicked or of those who do unrighteous things."²⁶⁰ The Lacedaemonians had sworn in 387/6, in the Peace of Antalcidas, that they would enforce the independence of the Greek states. Less than ten years later, in 379, they violated the sovereignty of Thebes by taking possession of the Theban Acropolis. Xenophon asserts that this action of impiety led directly to Sparta's fate. The Spartans, he says,

²⁵⁶ Finley, *Greek Historians* (1959), 14.

²⁵⁷ Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.3, describes Callias as "the sort of man to enjoy no less being praised by himself than by others." Regarding the famous Persian golden plane-tree, Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.38, he says it "was not large enough to afford shade for a grasshopper."

²⁵⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 7.2.4, relates an occasion when after ravaging the small state of Phlius, the column of Argives was calmly marching home. A sixty-man force of Philiasians attacked the Argive rearguard and "killed but a few of them, yet they set up a trophy, with the Argives looking on, precisely as if they had killed them all."

²⁵⁹ Rahn, "Xenophon's Historiography" (1971), 508.

²⁶⁰ Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.1.

were punished by the very men, unaided, who had been thus wronged, although before that time they had not been conquered by any single one of all the peoples that ever existed; while as for those among the Theban citizens who had led them into the Acropolis and had wanted the state to be in subjection to the Lacedaemonians in order that they might rule despotically themselves, just seven of the exiles were enough to destroy the government of these men. Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.1

Except for the reliance on the vengeance of the gods, Xenophon's approach here is reminiscent of Thucydides' manner. The prefiguration is explicit. The fate of Sparta's government is sealed by seven exiles, much as the fate of Athens is sealed by the destruction of the *hermai* prior to the Sicilian expedition, resulting in Alcibiades' disaffection.²⁶¹ The similarity is not simply in the religious arena, though that is interesting, but in events that do not appear to be significant. It was the consequence of these events that turned out to be significant for both Athens and Sparta.²⁶² In addition, it is important to note that Xenophon's belief in the power of deity to influence the course of history stands in contrast to Thucydides and even Herodotus.

Any historiological comparisons between Thucydides and historians who wrote in the time of Xenophon until the advent of the Hellenistic Age in 323 BC are a problem, due to the unfortunately small number of histories that have survived.²⁶³ Besides Xenophon, there are four other immediate continuators of Thucydides, either in subject matter or method: Cratippus of Athens (early fourth

²⁶¹ Thuc. 6.27-28.

²⁶² The result for the Athenians was the defection of Alcibiades to the Spartans. The result for the Spartans was their final defeat at the hands of Thebes.

²⁶³ The first historians of Alexander the Great (356-323), Cassisthenes, Nearchus, Ptolemy I, Aristobulus, and Cleitarchus, are all known from much later derivative traditions (A. B. Bosworth, "Alexander III," *OCD*³, 59) and for that reason they will not be considered here.

c.), the Oxyrhynchus historian (first half of the fourth c.),²⁶⁴ Philistus of Syracuse (c. 430-356), and Theopompus (378/77-c. 320). The four are relatively near Thucydides' time and, with the exception of Philistus, continue his history from 411, the year he breaks off.

About Cratippus and his method very little can be determined.²⁶⁵ From a reference in Plutarch,²⁶⁶ it can be gathered that Cratippus continued the history to the late 390s, to at least the battle of Cnidus (394), the end of Spartan hegemony. What can also be gathered from Plutarch is that Cratippus was acutely interested in the political and military events of the times, the importance of sea-power, the political manipulations of Alcibiades, the postwar upheavals of Athens, as well as the reemergence of Athenian power and Spartan difficulties resulting from the diplomatic and military successes of Persia. Plutarch's comments suggest a parallel between the histories of Thucydides and Cratippus, and indicate perhaps that he considered Cratippus a continuator of Thucydides in more than just the span of his history. Again regarding his method, Dionysius of Halicarnassus simply relates that Cratippus took exception to Thucydides' use of speeches in his narrative,²⁶⁷ which in itself implies that other elements of Thucydides' method may have sat well with Cratippus.

²⁶⁴ The debate surrounding the identity of the Oxyrhynchus historian is briefly reviewed in the Epilogue. For the purposes of this chapter, it has little impact on whether this individual is Cratippus, Theopompus, or any one of the half-dozen candidates put forth. What matters here is the influence of Thucydides.

²⁶⁵ Gordon S. Shrimpton, *Theopompus the Historian* (Montreal: 1991), xviii, refers to Cratippus as "the shadowy historian." Most of the glowing comments by Bury, *Greek Historians* (1909), 155-158, are the result of his identification of Cratippus as the Oxyrhynchus historian!

²⁶⁶ Plut. *De glor. Ath.* 345C-E.

²⁶⁷ Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 16.

With the discovery of what has been called the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* in 1906,²⁶⁸ parallel to Xenophon and a Thucydidean continuator was added to the short list. The historian began his work at almost precisely the point where Thucydides' history comes to an end in 411 and likely intended to close with either the battle of Cnidus (394) or the Peace of Antalidas (386).²⁶⁹ What survives, fewer than three hundred fragments,²⁷⁰ indicates a history written in scale, style and method more in mind of Thucydides than of Xenophon.²⁷¹

The historian is similar to Thucydides in many aspects:²⁷²

1. Annual events chronicled with respect to summer and winter;
2. His accounts by personal observation and reports by other eyewitnesses;
3. Use of words that were reported by those who actually heard them;
4. No suggestion that other literary sources were used to flesh out the narrative;
5. Digressions are more than a stylistic peculiarity in that their main purpose is to elucidate background to events and provide causation going beyond the immediate;
6. Historical facts are rarely presented with additional personal comment.²⁷³

²⁶⁸ *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*, edited with translation and commentary by P. R. McKechnie and S. J. Kern (Warminster: 1988), 3-6, notes that the 1906 fragment, or London Fragment, was supplemented by two other finds: the Florence Fragment in 1934, and the Cairo Fragment in 1976.

²⁶⁹ I. A. F. Bruce, *An Historical Commentary on the Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* (Cambridge: 1967), 3-4.

²⁷⁰ McKechnie and Kern, *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* (1988), 3-5.

²⁷¹ Bruce, *Commentary* (1967), 4.

²⁷² The observations here are derived from Bruce, *Commentary* (1967), 3-20.

In addition, the *Oxyrhynchus* historian was not influenced by the rhetorical style of the times, and his narrative is even less emotional than that of Thucydides.²⁷⁴ Speeches are not found in either of the fragments. Whereas Thucydides used speeches to give background to the circumstances of events or give fuller understanding to causation, the *Oxyrhynchus* historian, it seems, is content to achieve this by narrative.²⁷⁵ His efforts to acquire accurate material from eyewitnesses, personal accounts, and informants is in stark contrast to Xenophon; additionally, where Xenophon gave little attention or significance to political history, naval operations, or the domestic politics of the European Greek cities, the *Oxyrhynchus* historian is mindful that a comprehensive understanding of the causes of the turmoil of the times cannot simply be realized from a solely Spartan perspective. One example of this, among many, is his treatment of the Battle of Notium (406). There are five ancient sources for this event,²⁷⁶ but most modern historians, rejecting Xenophon's Spartan bias, rely chiefly on the account narrated in the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*.²⁷⁷ The *Oxyrhynchus* historian is only one of the historians discussed here whose subsequent obscurity and lack of popular

²⁷³ The historian will, on occasion, give what amounts to a Thucydidean comment: "And so the army of the King, having come into great danger, ceased from disorder on account of Conon and his energy." Translation from McKechnie and Kern, *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* (1988), 105.

²⁷⁴ Bruce, *Commentary* (1967), 20.

²⁷⁵ Bruce, *Commentary* (1967), 6.

²⁷⁶ Xen. *Hell.* 1.5.12-15; Diod. Sic. 13.71; Plut. *Vit. Alc.* 35.5-6, *Vit. Lys.* 5.1-2; and *Hell. Oxy.* 4.

²⁷⁷ Kagan, *The Fall* (1987), 315 fn. 92, also indicates that his (Kagan's) explanation of the events rests on the version in Diodorus. Kenneth S. Sacks, "Diodorus," *OCD*³, 472, says that Diodorus' main source was Ephorus. Sacks, "Ephorus," *OCD*³, 529, says that in Ephorus' commitment to historical judgment, Ephorus preferred the *Oxyrhynchus Historian* to Xenophon. Bruce, *Commentary* (1967), 4 fn. 1, agrees that Ephorus used him as his main source for the period 411-386.

appeal gives evidence to the changes in the methods and aims of historical writing that persisted to the times of Polybius and the later Roman writers. Along with Philistus of Syracuse, though, he embraced much of the Thucydidean method.

Philistus of Syracuse, like Thucydides, was a military leader, experienced in public affairs, and a recalled exile.²⁷⁸ He is another early fourth century historian who survives only in fragments. Of the seventy-six extant fragments of Philistus, a full forty-two are contained in a sixth century AD Byzantine geographical lexicon.²⁷⁹ Not much can be said directly about his work. Its importance for this study rests solely on ancient testimonies, which indicate that Philistus was an admired historian who wrote much in the character of Thucydides' style and method. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Cicero, and Quintilian all regarded Philistus as a continuator of Thucydides' method.²⁸⁰ This is significant given that the subject of Philistus' historical writing did not commence with the 411 ending of Thucydides; his *Sicelica*, *The History of Sicily*, extends from the mythological time to 363. The obvious invitation to compare with Thucydides was not present, i.e., starting his history in 411, but that was not necessary to draw comparisons between the two. Unfortunately, admirers of his

²⁷⁸ Lionel Pearson, *The Greek Historians of the West: Timaeus and His Predecessors* (Atlanta: 1987), 19-21; Bury, *Greek Historians* (1909), 160.

²⁷⁹ Klaus Meister, "Philistus," *OCD*³, 1164. In this entry, Meister quotes Edward Meyer noting the loss of Philistus' work as "one of the most serious losses for ancient historiography."

²⁸⁰ Meister, "Philistus," *OCD*³, 1164. Dionysius, of course, considers any comparison to Thucydides opprobrium. Pearson, *Greek Historians* (1987), 24, thinks that Dionysius was prejudiced against Philistus because of his political attitude. That may also be a consideration.

style offer no textual examples.²⁸¹ Cicero is highly complimentary and considered Philistus “a capital writer, pithy, penetrating, concise – almost a Thucydides in miniature.”²⁸²

Theopompus was arguably one of the most interesting historians of the fourth century.²⁸³ Like Thucydides, he was of an oligarchic family but evidently with democratic leanings. He was twice exiled from the island Chios, the first time for Spartan leanings, and the second during the time of the successor kings in the wake of Alexander’s death.²⁸⁴ He was a rhetorician and perhaps a student of the Panhellenist Isocrates (436-338); he was active in the Macedonian court of Philip II, a political supporter of Alexander, and, in the end, a disagreeable, somewhat troublesome individual.²⁸⁵

Theopompus’ *Hellenica* is a continuation of Thucydides from 411 to the Battle of Cnidus (394). Again, what is extant consists of only nineteen fragments, and it is impossible to make any determinations regarding the contents, chronological arrangements, bias, or the style and quality of his method.²⁸⁶ His

²⁸¹ Pearson, *Greek Historians* (1987), 29.

²⁸² Cic. *Q Fr.* 2.13.

²⁸³ Bury, *Historians* (1909), 165, comments that some have labeled him a great historian, but he says that the “evidence is sufficient to disprove such a claim.”

²⁸⁴ Michael Attyah Flower, *Theopompus of Chios: History and Rhetoric in the Fourth Century BC* (Oxford: 1994), 12-13. Flower also quotes Photius, a scholar of history and the Patriarch of Constantinople in the 9th century AD. Photius says that in the second of Theopompus’ exile, “he was shut out from every land and reached Egypt, where Ptolemy, the king of that country, did not wish to receive him but wanted to put him to death as a busybody; Ptolemy would have done so if he (Theopompus) had not been saved by the intercession of certain of his friends” (12-13).

²⁸⁵ Flower, *Theopompus* (1994), 17-25. Flower says it is unlikely that he was a student of Isocrates (25); Luce, *Greek Historians* (1997) 109, says he was.

²⁸⁶ Klaus Meister, “Theopompus,” *OCD*³, 1505.

Philippica, the history of Philip II of Macedon, survives in 376 fragments, and some 500 lines were quoted in ancient authors whose works are still extant.²⁸⁷ This relative wealth of textual material certainly offers enough for a reasonable assessment of the characteristics of Theopompus' method. Like Herodotus, he had a broad conception of history and showed an acute interest in ethnography, geography, cultural and religious history, as well as myth.²⁸⁸ He was inclined to digressions and much moralizing.²⁸⁹ He was similar to Thucydides in one important respect: he indicates that his accounts are founded on rigorous personal observation, personal research and experience.²⁹⁰ One modern scholar has suggested that, given Theopompus' nature, his *Hellenica* may have been meant as a retort to Xenophon's.²⁹¹ True to his apparent estimation of self, Theopompus is quick to state his own superiority over Herodotus, Thucydides, and perhaps the *Oxyrhynchus* historian also.²⁹² Beyond all of this, Theopompus was one of the most read and highly influential Greek historians of the ancient Greek and Roman world. It even seems that there was an abiding interest in his

²⁸⁷ Meister, "Theopompus," *OCD*³, 1505.

²⁸⁸ Shrimpton, *Theopompus* (1991) is a comprehensive monograph on Theopompus: besides being well written, Shrimpton includes in his appendices (Appendix B, pp. 196-274) the extremely helpful *testimonia* (T) and fragments (F) of Theopompus. Shrimpton is used exclusively for the references for this note and the following two (fn. 283 and 284), which include the page numbers of his monograph and/or the numbers of the *testimonia* and/or fragments; universal history: 67, table 2; ethnography: 101-9, F260, F274(a and b); geography: 94-101, F129; culture and religion: 132-5, F64(a and b), F285(a-b), F331; myth: F71, F75(a-e).

²⁸⁹ Shrimpton, *Theopompus* (1991), digressions: xvii, 15-28, F67(a and b); moralizing: 21, 33, 140-41, F114, F124.

²⁹⁰ Shrimpton, *Theopompus* (1991), T20(a), F181.

²⁹¹ Luce, *Greek Historians* (1997) 109.

²⁹² Shrimpton, *Theopompus* (1991) 285, n. 4.

works into the late antique period.²⁹³ Given the Hellenizing influences on the writing of history and the attendant public appreciation, this is not surprising.

No less an expert than Dionysius of Halicarnassus (fl. late first c. BC) points to Theopompus as the embodiment of what a historian should be.²⁹⁴ In a lengthy letter to Gnaeus Pompeius, Dionysius considers the necessary attributes of a good historian and the merits of a number, including Herodotus, Thucydides, and Theopompus. Finding fault with nearly all of them, he reserves most of his objections for Thucydides and unabashed praise for Theopompus.²⁹⁵ Thomas Hobbes, in his 1634 translation of Thucydides, reacts to Dionysius' appraisals.²⁹⁶

I think there was never written so much absurdity in so few lines. He is contrary to the opinion of all men that ever spake of this subject besides himself, and to common sense. For he makes the scope of history, not profit by writing truth, but delight of the hearer, as if it were a song. And the argument of history, he would not by any means have to contain the calamities and misery of his country; these he could have buried in silence: but only their glorious and splendid actions. Amongst the virtues of an historiographer, he reckons affection to his country; study to please the hearer; to write of more than his argument leads him to; and to conceal all actions that were not to the honour of his country. Most manifest vices. He was a rhetorician; and seemeth he would have nothing written, but that which was most capable of rhetorical ornament.

While it is easy to find agreement with these observations, Hobbes gives no allowances to fact that Dionysius' literary criticisms reflect the Hellenizing influences on historical writing. In fact, the complaints that Hobbes lists are exactly the elements embraced by the historians influenced by the rhetorical

²⁹³ Meister, "Theopompus," *OCD*³, 1506; regarding the later period, Photius claims to have read all fifty-three extant books of *Philippica*; cf. Flower, *Theopompus* (1994), 12.

²⁹⁴ Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 6.

²⁹⁵ Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 3-5.

²⁹⁶ Thomas Hobbes, *Hobbes's Thucydides*, ed. Richard Schlatter (New Brunswick: 1975), 22.

skills of teachers such as Isocrates and their reactions to the disintegration of the classical world into the various kingdoms of the successors of Alexander.

In the Hellenistic Age, the historical focus had little to do with the historical approach of Herodotus, certainly not Thucydides, nor the likes of Philistus and the *Oxyrhynchus* historian. Hellenistic concern was with the fabulous, reading for pleasure, and of course the aggrandizement of Hellenistic princes.²⁹⁷ A brief illustration will be sufficient to illustrate the historical literature of the age. It is a passage from Hegesias of Cyrene (third c. BC) who wrote a history of Alexander.²⁹⁸ He wrote in a prose dithyramb, a popular style of the times. The passage comments on Alexander's destruction of Thebes in 336:²⁹⁹

In raising to earth Thebes, O Alexander,
Thine hand a deed has done,
Such as Zeus would do
Were he to cast the moon utterly
Out from yon heaven's section;
For the sun as a fitting symbol I keep for Athens.
Verily these cities twain were visual orbs of Hellas;
So that now for the one of the pair in pain I travail.
For Hellas hath lost half her vision, one eye knocked out,
Even the Theban town.

It is not surprising that many of the works of these later historians do not survive. There are, of course, other obvious reasons: Hellenistic histories often ran thirty or more books, or scrolls, which reduced their chance of survival because it simply was too expensive to duplicate them.³⁰⁰ The object of a historian's flattery

²⁹⁷ Luce, *Greek Historians* (1997), 108.

²⁹⁸ Bury, *Greek Historians* (1909), 171.

²⁹⁹ Quoted in Bury, *Greek Historians* (1909), 171.

³⁰⁰ Luce, *Greek Historians* (1997), 108.

may live only a little shorter than his historical portrait. The reading tastes of the public were as capricious as they are in any age. Finally, the absence of truth in favor of exaggeration certainly affected the lasting value of any history.

It seems appropriate, however, to give some credit to the labors of Dionysius. The first century BC marked a time when interest in the classics and classical history was in its ascendancy.³⁰¹ Dionysius did much to advance increased interest in the great historians of ancient Greece. A century later, Lucian (b. c. 120 AD) wrote his *Quomodo historia conscribenda sit*, a “how-to work for would-be historians,” making direct reference to the works of Herodotus and Thucydides.³⁰² Without the efforts of writers like Dionysius and the attendant Greek yearning for the glory days of the ancient times,³⁰³ it is possible that Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon would have survived only in fragments as have the other historians considered in this chapter. As it proved to be, interest in their works, especially that of Thucydides, was important in the Roman exercise of writing history. It is now appropriate to consider Thucydides’ place in Roman historiography.

³⁰¹ Luce, *Greek Historians* (1997), 106, 121.

³⁰² Lucian, *Hist. conscr.*

³⁰³ Most of the Greek states at the time of Dionysius were, of course, part of the expanding Roman empire.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROMAN CONTINUATORS

Before discussing the great Latin historians, Sallust (85-35 BC), Livy (59 BC- AD 17), and Tacitus (c. 56-after 118 AD), it is well to make some general remarks on the development, nature, and character of Roman historiography. Importantly, the Romans lacked the epic poets who impacted so greatly the development of Greek historiography. Rome's first epic poets, Gnaeus Naevius and Quintus Ennius, arrived comparatively late in the latter third and early second centuries BC.³⁰⁴ In contrast, the Greeks were able to point to Homer and Hesiod for specific stories about the founding of Athens, Sparta, Corinth, and Thebes, for example. The traditional legends of Rome are less precise.³⁰⁵ It matters little here that Cicero and Polybius assert that the founding was a gradual process from Romulus through the contributions of each of the kings,³⁰⁶ or that Dionysius of Halicarnassus maintains that Rome was born fully matured with a constitution and a large urban population.³⁰⁷ Indeed, modern scholars have knowledge of at least twenty-five foundation stories compiled by the

³⁰⁴ H. D. Jocelyn, "Naevius, Gnaeus," *OCD*³, 1021-1022, and "Ennius, Quintus," *OCD*³, 525-526.

³⁰⁵ T. J. Cornell, *The Beginnings of Rome: Italy and Rome from the Bronze Age to the Punic Wars (c. 1000-264 BC)* (London and New York: 1995), 59.

³⁰⁶ Cic. *Rep.* 2.37; Polyb. 6.10.14.

³⁰⁷ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.7-29.

antiquarians of the late Republic; many of them make no reference at all to Romulus or Aeneas.³⁰⁸ What is important to this thesis is that the historians of ancient Rome had a significantly less strong foundation for their material and no national stories upon which to build their histories.

Quintus Fabius Pictor, considered Rome's first historian, wrote between 215 and 200 BC.³⁰⁹ Regarded as the "Father of Roman History," he was the first to write a Roman historical work in prose.³¹⁰ That he wrote in Greek³¹¹ should not suggest that he wrote for a Greek audience, though it is tempting to suppose that he was a precursor to Polybius in explaining Rome and its institutions to the Greeks. The educated of the Roman elite, the ruling class, were able to read Greek and his didactic message supports the view that the Senate was his intended audience.³¹² His history is an account of Rome from its foundations to the beginning of the Second Punic War and was nationalistic and moralizing in its anecdotes.³¹³ Though subsequent Latin historians would look to the Greeks as models for writing history, Fabius Pictor set the character of Roman historiography for centuries to come.³¹⁴

This distinctive Roman character proves critical in understanding the

³⁰⁸ Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome* (1995).

³⁰⁹ Momigliano, *Classical Foundations* (1990), 88.

³¹⁰ E. Badian, "The Early Historians," *Latin Historians*, ed. T. A. Dorey (New York: 1966), 3.

³¹¹ Cic. *Div.* 1.6; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.6.2.

³¹² Badian, "Early Historians," *Latin Historians* (1966), 6.

³¹³ Mellor, *Roman Historians* (1999), 11, 14.

³¹⁴ Mellor, *Roman Historians* (1999), 17.

influence of the Greeks, in this case Thucydides, in any appraisal of the Latin historical method and purpose. Whereas it can be argued that Thucydides refrains from overtly teaching moral lessons, the histories of the Romans, though obsessively political, are deeply and explicitly moral. The reason for this significant Roman departure from the Greek model may be obvious: for the Greeks, important moral issues and social or political theory were left to the philosopher or the individual; for the Romans, due to a lack of significant philosophical figures,³¹⁵ it was their histories that provided the fora to investigate the questions of morals, ethics, and political theory.³¹⁶ Individual and national ethical themes are important elements in the narratives of all of the Latin historians discussed in this chapter. They continually illustrate moral lessons that were learned, not learned or should have been learned and the consequences for the individual or the *res publica*. Sallust wrote with a view of Roman society in rapid moral decay; Livy lived in an ascendant Rome but was pessimistic of her retaining her greatness; Tacitus witnessed Rome's descent into corruption and crime.³¹⁷ They all wrote their histories with these thoughts in mind, and not absent from their works were their sometimes painful personal relations with Rome.

³¹⁵ Alan Wardman, *Rome's Debt to Greece* (London: 1976), 8, offers a reasonable suggestion for this: "Greeks could be seen as men who went in for interminable discussions but had no part to play in important public affairs. Hence there was some dislike of philosophy, which was considered a form of activity remote from the serious business of life; Cicero indicates that his own affection for philosophy could expose him to the charge that he was busy with irrelevancies."

³¹⁶ Cato the Elder (234-149 BC), an important figure in determining the role of Latin history, wrote the first Roman history in Latin. His works, for the education of his son, explained the moral public and private responsibilities of a Roman citizen. The message, of course, was addressed to all Romans. See also Badian, "Early Historians," *Latin Historians* (1966), 7-11.

³¹⁷ T. A. Dorey, *Latin Historians* (New York: 1966), ix.

C. Sallustius Crispus (85-35 BC), of the three Latin historians, is probably the historian on whom the work of Thucydides had the greatest impact. Quintilian (c. 35-90s AD) would “not hesitate to match Sallust against Thucydides,” and Velleius (20/19 BC-after 30 AD) considers him “the rival of Thucydides.”³¹⁸ The elder Seneca (c. 50 BC-c. 40 AD) suggests that Sallust had Thucydides’ work in front of him as he wrote his own histories. In his *Controversiae*, Seneca relates one imaginary discussion:

Then he quoted an epigram of Thucydides: “Success is wonderfully good at hiding and shading over everybody’s faults,” followed by Sallust’s version: “Success is a wonderful screen for vice.” Thucydides’ primary virtue is brevity, but Sallust has beaten him at it and defeated him on his own ground. The Greek epigram is certainly short, but there are words one can remove without harm to the sense; take out “hiding” or “shading,” take out “everybody’s” – and the sense will remain, not perhaps so pretty, but equally complete. But from Sallust’s epigram nothing can be removed without spoiling the sense. Sen. *Controv.* 9.1.13

Seneca’s deconstruction of the lines is perceptive of their styles. It is of little consequence that neither of these quoted lines is to be found in their respective works. What is significant is that upon publication of Sallust’s monographs, it was immediately apparent he was influenced greatly by Thucydides.

In his seminal biography of Sallust, Ronald Syme notes that the Hellenistic historians, with their pathos, horrors, eroticism and supernatural themes, did not have any influence on Sallust, and despite Cicero’s praises for Cato’s old-fashioned manner in the *Origines*, Sallust discovered in Thucydides two areas of

³¹⁸ Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.101, in a pejorative sense given that he earlier warned students against adopting his style, but in the same line (*Inst.* 2.5.19) says that Sallust is a greater historian than Livy; Vell. Pat. 2.36.2.

exploitation: an innovative style and an equivalency of subject.³¹⁹ The personal parallels Sallust shared with Thucydides may also have contributed to a personal connection with the Athenian: Thucydides knew politics and war, was considered a failed general, and wrote his work in exile. Sallust too had this knowledge, and retired to his estates under a cloud. Following the proscriptions of the Second Triumvirate,³²⁰ he began his first work, the *Bellum Catilinae* (c. 42/1 BC) in the midst of the decline and fall of the Republic.

His monograph on the conspiracy of Sergius Catilina (d. 62 BC) opens with the famous long and self-revealing preface. It is at least one-sixth of the total work and this, among other elements, is a justification of the work that Sallust undertakes. Thucydides did the same in the introductory lines of his history. Justification, however, is always close to the surface in Sallust's long introduction. The influence of Thucydides on the first thirteen chapters of the *Bellum Catilinae* is evident in the similarities but also evident in one striking departure. A close reading of the preface reveals the role that sophistic rhetoric and argument played in the politics of the day.³²¹ Sallust begins his work as follows:

Everyman who wishes to rise superior to the lower animals should strive his hardest to avoid living all his days in silent obscurity, like the beast of

³¹⁹ Ronald Syme, *Sallust* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: 1964), 51, 56; Syme says, "For Sallust, it can be claimed, Thucydides was a recent discovery, congenial and exciting" (245).

³²⁰ Cicero was himself a victim on December 6, 43 BC

³²¹ An analysis of Sallust's preface is not simple. While it is generally accepted that Sallust presents his arguments well, and that most commentary on his work is positive, agreement between scholars is rare. The following observations deal with only part of the preface and only in an obvious connection with Thucydides. For the definitive treatment see P. McGushin, C. *Sallustius Crispus, Bellum Catilinae: A Commentary* (Leiden: 1977), 30-105.

the field, creatures which go with their faces to the ground and are the slaves of their bellies. We human beings have mental as well as physical powers; the mind, which we share with the gods, is the ruling element in us, while the chief function of the body, which we have in common with the beasts, is to obey. Surely, therefore, it is our intellectual rather than our physical powers that we should use in the pursuit of fame. Sall. *Cat.* 1.1-4

There is a letter to Julius Caesar attributed to Sallust. After he has declared his total subordination to Caesar,³²² Sallust underlines his preoccupation with fame: "For my own part, I desire my plans to be wise and above all practicable; for wherever you carry them out successfully, I shall gain fame."³²³ It has been noted that he completely masks the fact that charges of extortion during his governorship of Africa Nova in 45/46 forced his departure from public life.³²⁴

Paralleling his thoughts in the first lines of the preface, he says later,

Accordingly, when my mind found peace after many troubles and perils and I had determined that I must pass what was left of my life aloof from public affairs, it was not my intention to waste my precious leisure in indolence and sloth, nor yet by turning to farming or the chase, to lead a life devoted to slavish employment. On the contrary, I resolved to return to a cherished purpose from which ill-starred ambition had diverted me, and write a history of the Roman people, selecting such portions as seemed to me worthy of record; and I was confirmed in this resolution by the fact that my mind was free from hope, and fear, and partisanship. I shall therefore write briefly and as truthfully as possible of the conspiracy of Catiline; for I regard that event as worthy of special notice because of the extraordinary nature of the crime and the danger arising from it. Sall. *Cat.* 4.1-4.

The last part of this text is identical in motivations and approach to that of Thucydides. Both see their subjects as being manifest in the history of their

³²² Sall. [*Ad, Caes, sen.*] 1.4; M. Cary, "A Letter of Sallust to Caesar," *CR*, Vol. 51, No. 5 (Nov., 1937), 184, observes that the dates offered for this letter are between 51-49 BC.

³²³ Sall. [*Ad, Caes, sen.*] 12.3.

³²⁴ C. S. Kraus and A. J. Woodman, *Latin Historians* (Oxford: 1997), 15.

times; Sallust, like his predecessor, is committed to relating the truth of the matter; and the preface charts the earlier history of Rome,³²⁵ just like Thucydides' preface on the earlier history of Greece.³²⁶ The point of departure, however, is the treatment of their situations that have allowed them the time to compose. Thucydides gives no indication of acrimony about his dismissal and exile after Amphipolis; his text gives no sense that he feels required to offer defenses for writing rather than acting.³²⁷ Sallust, on the other hand, must not simply defend the deeds of the writer (*scriptor*) as opposed to the actor (*auctor*), but the distinctive worth of each must be also blurred:

It is glorious to serve one's country by deeds; even to serve her by words is a thing not to be despised; one may become famous in peace as well as in war. Not only those who have acted, but those also who have recorded the acts of others oftentimes receive our approbation. Sall. *Cat.* 3.1.

Thucydides is striking by comparison in that he does not attempt to validate the substitution of words for his participation in politics or war.

Sallust's treatment of the conspiracy of Catiline is revealing of Sallust's perceived loss of the public life, but it also shows Sallust's historical genius in the way he deals with the affair. He likens good actions in politics and war with speaking well of a state: "to serve one's country is glorious, but even to praise it is not unacceptable."³²⁸ Interestingly enough, though, Sallust never praises his

³²⁵ Sall. *Cat.* 6-13.

³²⁶ Thuc. 1.2.1-21.

³²⁷ Thuc. 5.26.5; see above pp. 55-56.

³²⁸ This is another translation of a part of Sall. *Cat.* 3.1. The Latin reads "Pulchrum est bene facere rei publicae, etiam bene dicere haud absurdum est." McGushin, *Commentary* (1977), 44, notes that "the meaning of the sentence is clear," but he also notes the variety of assumptions based on different translations. For the purpose here, either translation will work, though the

country in any of his works.

Other than Catiline, the central figure in the affair was Cicero. For his actions in uncovering the conspiracy, Cicero was hailed as the savior of Rome and given the title *pater patriae*, or “Father of his Country.”³²⁹ If Sallust’s purpose had been to speak well of, or praise his country, Cicero would likely have been a major figure in his account. He is not.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus found fault with Thucydides, saying that he “writes of a single war, and one which was neither glorious nor fortunate, but which had best never happened at all or, failing that, should have been consigned to silence and oblivion and ignored by later generations.”³³⁰ Dionysius gives his reason for Thucydides’ motivations a few lines later:

This should not have been done by a Greek and an Athenian, especially an Athenian who was not one of the outcasts, but one whom his fellow citizens counted among their foremost men in appointing to commands and other offices of state. And such is his malice, that he actually attributes the overt causes of the war to his own city, though he could have attributed them to many other sources. Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 6

It is doubtful that any modern scholar would agree with Dionysius; some, though, may see that his comments could apply to Sallust.³³¹ Expanding Cicero’s role in the story would have shifted Sallust’s emphasis from what he considered,

second is somewhat clearer. The second phrase of the Latin statement is understated, that is, it is typical of Sallust in this discussion of the equality of acting and writing to be modest. It may be that he is being falsely modest, or it can be argued that he himself is not quite convinced of his own argument. Nonetheless, the phrase easily means it is glorious or noble or honorable to serve one’s country, it is also the same to speak well of it.

³²⁹ Nicholas Purcell, “Pater Patriae,” *OCD*³, 1121.

³³⁰ Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 6.

³³¹ Kraus and Woodman, *Latin Historians* (1997), 17.

rightly, the significant message of the events and for that matter, its significance in Roman history. By the time he wrote the *Bellum Catilinae*, Sallust had witnessed the civil wars between Marius and Sulla, the civil wars between the Caesarians, and the ascendancy of the Second Triumvirate (this time dutifully legitimized by the Senate), followed by even more proscriptions. The corruption of Rome gave cause for the rise of Catiline and reason enough for Sallust to tell its story: corruption and intrigue proved to be the Republic's continuing story.³³²

Though Sallust does not mention Thucydides by name, he remarks on the talents of great Athenian writers, *scriptorum magna ingenia*:³³³

The acts of the Athenians, in my judgment, were indeed great and glorious enough, but nevertheless somewhat less important than fame represents them. But because Athens produced writers of exceptional talent, the exploits of the men of Athens are heralded throughout the world as unsurpassed. Sall. *Cat.* 8.2-3.

The consequential advantages to the fame of Athens' leaders, due in large part to the Athenian writers, could not have been lost on Cicero either.³³⁴ As has been indicated, Sallust took a different turn. He certainly had Thucydides in mind when he wrote the above and he applied the same historical observations to the *Bellum Catilinae*, the *Bellum Jugurthinum*, and the *Historiae*, the latter surviving only in fragments. He clearly considers Thucydides' treatment of factional strife and the affliction of civil war, or *stasis*.³³⁵ Stylistic reminiscences can be seen in

³³² Sall. *Cat.* 14.1.

³³³ G. M. Paul, "Sallust," *Latin Historians*, ed. T. A. Dorey (New York: 1966), 107; Thomas Francis Scanlon, *The Influence of Thucydides on Sallust* (Heidelberg: 1980), 11.

³³⁴ Cic. *Fam.* 5.12.3; see above p. 8.

³³⁵ Paul, "Sallust," *Latin Historians* (1966), 107.

major pieces of Sallust's works and even in inconsequential images. At moments of crisis for Nicias and Catiline there is a striking similarity:

Meanwhile Nicias, appalled by the state of affairs, realizing the greatness and the nearness of danger... Thuc. 7.69.2

Now, when Catiline perceived that he was shut in between the mountains and the forces of his enemies, that his plans in the city had failed... Sall. *Cat.* 57.5

The parallels extend a few lines later with Nicias and Petreius, a lieutenant in the Senatorial forces against Catiline:

(Nicias) called on the captains one by one, addressing each by his father's name and by his own, and by that of his tribe, and beseeched them not to be false to their own personal renown, or to obscure the hereditary virtues for which their ancestors were illustrious; he reminded them of their country...wives, children, and national gods... Thuc. 7.69.2

(Petreius) addressed each of his men by name, exhorted him, and begged him to remember that he was fighting against unarmed highwaymen in defence of his country, his children, his altars, and his hearth. Sall. *Cat.* 59.5

The similarity here can be explained simply by the similarity of the events:

Thucydides observes that exhortations and arguments in times of crisis are made "with little alteration...to serve on all occasions alike."³³⁶ Sallustian descriptions of the evils of revolution are paralleled in Thucydides,³³⁷ so are, among other

³³⁶ Thuc. 7.69.2. Ironically, Thucydides' observation should prove to be a warning to modern academics who find parallels that exist simply because of the similarity of events. It is quite amusing. That may be why M. L. W. Laistner, *The Greater Roman Historian* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: 1947), 170n6, consigns this likeness to an endnote.

³³⁷ Sall. *Cat.* 10, 12, 38.3-4, 52.1, *Iug.* 41-42, *Hist.* 1.7, 1.12, 1.55.24, 1.77.7, 13, 17, and 4.69.5; Thuc. 3.82. Debt here and in following parallels is due to the outstanding work by Professor Scanlon, *Thucydides on Sallust* (1980). He has included in his work an index of well over two hundred passages in Sallust that illustrate comparisons to Thucydides in theme, style, wording or content. Many are obvious, many are not, but none appear questionable.

themes, character summations,³³⁸ characterization of peoples,³³⁹ their shared disdain for the multitude,³⁴⁰ and the process of decline,³⁴¹ to note just a few similarities.

As indicated, Thucydides used speeches to sum up or underscore critical historical issues. They may be isolated speeches, standing alone or prefiguring other words or events, or they may be presented in pairs, begging contrast. There are four speeches in *Bellum Catilinae*. Catiline, appropriately, speaks the first and the last. The other two speeches are the famous paired speeches of Caesar and Cato. In Sallust's works, the four speeches best illustrate the influence of Thucydides in his use of prefiguration and the conflict of positions.

The first of Catiline's speeches is quite lengthy:

If I had not already tested your courage and loyalty, in vain would a great opportunity have presented itself; high hopes and power would have been placed in my hand to no purpose, nor would I with the aid of cowards or inconstant hearts grasp at uncertainty in place of certainty. Sall. *Cat.* 20.1-3.

How long, pray, will you endure this, brave hearts? Is it not better to die valiantly, than ignominiously to lose our wretched and dishonoured lives after being the sport of others' insolence? Assuredly (I swear it by the faith of gods and men!) victory is within our grasp. We are in the prime of life, we are stout of heart; to them, on the contrary, years and riches have brought utter dotage. We need only to strike; the rest will take care of itself. Sall. *Cat.* 20.9-10.

³³⁸ Sall. *Cat.* 54 (of Caesar and Cato); Thuc. 2.65 (of Pericles).

³³⁹ Trust between allies: Sall. *Iug.* 14.5, 95.2f, 110.1, 4; Thuc. 1.32, 2.40. Contrasting characterizations: Sall. *Iug.* 81.1 (Numidians and Romans); Thuc. 1.68-72 (Athenians and Spartans).

³⁴⁰ Inconstancy, immoral actions: Sall. *Iug.* 66.2, 64.2, Thuc. 3.70ff; Sall. *Iug.* 67.1, Thuc. 3.74.1; Sall. *Iug.* 67.2, Thuc. 3.81.4-5. Shock and reaction in crisis or defeat: Sall. *Iug.* 39.1, Thuc. 8.1.1-2.

³⁴¹ Sall. *Cat.* 10-12, 36.4-39.5, Sall. *Iug.* 41-42; Thuc. 3.82-83.

Awake then! Lo, here, here before your eyes, is the freedom for which you have often longed, and with it riches, honour, and glory; Fortune offers all these things as prizes to the victors. The undertaking itself, the opportunity, the dangers, you need, the splendid spoils of war, speak louder than any words of mine. Use me either as your leader or as a soldier in the ranks; my soul and my body shall be at your service. Sall. *Cat.* 20.14-16.

Catiline's last speech is much shorter. The first line reads, "I am well aware soldiers, that words do not supply valour, and that a spiritless army is not made vigorous, or a timid one stout-hearted, by a speech from its commander."³⁴² It has been noted that the first speech sounds much like a general's harangue given to the troops before battle.³⁴³ It is in fact an address to supporters prior to his failed attempt in the consular elections. Sallust not only prefigures the final address and subsequent defeat of Catiline, but he also sets the mood of the entire work as a struggle between *optimates* and *populares*. Sallust is not without a dramatic sense of irony when he has Catiline acknowledge that mere words will not invigorate an army. It is a marvelous piece of literary technique.

The second set of speeches, touched upon briefly here, is the pairing of Caesar and Cato's addresses to the Senate regarding the fate of the conspirators.³⁴⁴ The conspirators were revealed through the efforts of Cicero, although Cicero, significantly, does not speak. He has been instrumental in the passage of the *senatus consultum ultimum*, an extreme measure to justify action

³⁴² Sall. *Cat.* 58.1.

³⁴³ Elizabeth Keitel, "The Influence of Thucydides 7.61-71 on Sallust *Cat.* 20-21," *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 82, No. 4 (Apr. - May, 1987), 293.

³⁴⁴ Sall. *Cat.* 51-52.

in the state of emergency in order to defend the *res publica*.³⁴⁵ The subject of the exchange was how severely the Senate should use this authority, which in this case was the question of summarily putting the conspirators to death.

It is within the framework of *virtus* that Sallust compares the two men and obviously prefigures the events of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, under the political sway of the Senate and the idealist interests of Cato.³⁴⁶ Sallust states in his preface that virtue is not far removed from ambition.³⁴⁷ In the same lines he says, "The noble and the base alike long for glory, honour, and power, but the former mount by the true path, whereas the latter, being destitute of noble qualities, rely upon craft and deception." In this exchange are two *nobiles*: Caesar, the patrician and *popularis*, and Cato, the plebeian and optimate. The dilemma Sallust addresses in the pairing is that while both men possess *virtus*, they are at variance in their speech, and will be even more so in their actions fifteen years hence. McGushin allows that this divergence in virtue, relative to speech, conduct, principles and allegiance, could possibly have been synthesized, and that in their totality, the Republic could have been saved.³⁴⁸ The problem, he claims, was that Caesar defined *virtus* with its emphasis on *res privatae*, and Cato "by remoteness from participation" in the *res publica*. McGushin does not make clear who is being remote in this participation. If he

³⁴⁵ Arnaldo Momigliano and Andrew William Lintott, "*senatus consultum ultimum*," *OCD*³, 1388-89.

³⁴⁶ McGushin, *Commentary* (1977), 311.

³⁴⁷ Sall. *Cat.* 11.1-2.

³⁴⁸ McGushin, "Caesar and Cato," *Commentary* (1977), 309-311.

means by this that Cato, though always influential, was isolated due to his intransigent nature, it is an accurate observation. There is no evidence, however, that Sallust held synthesis as a possibility. Cato and Caesar faced each other from two extreme and morally opposed personal philosophies, philosophies that Sallust recognizes in the end will bring down the Republic. Thus, upon completion of the *Bellum Catilinae*, he started his work the *Bellum Jugurthinum*, turning to what he considered were the initial instances of craft and deception.³⁴⁹ The conflict of positions that Sallust regards as obvious in Caesar and Cato, were recurrent in Thucydides. It is a conspicuous similarity to the pairing of Cleon and Diodotus arguing the fate of the Mytilenes,³⁵⁰ the difference being that in Thucydides pragmatism, influenced by benevolence, won the day.

Titus Livius (59 BC-AD 17) never served in the Senate and never commanded an army. There is, in fact, no evidence that he ever served the *res publica* in public office or in the military.³⁵¹ One hundred and fifty years earlier, Polybius had argued that

It is in fact as impossible to write well on the operations in war, if a man has had no experience of actual service, as it is to write well on politics without having been engaged in political transactions and vicissitudes. And when the history is written by the book-learned, without technical knowledge, and without clearness of detail, the work loses all its value. Polyb. 12.25.1.

Additionally, Polybius notes the historian requirement for personal observation,³⁵²

³⁴⁹ Momigliano. *Essays* (1977), 163.

³⁵⁰ Thuc. 3.37-3.48.

³⁵¹ Mellor, *Roman Historians* (1999), 48.

³⁵² Polyb. 3.4.13.

visual evidence,³⁵³ and importantly, a geographical knowledge: "But lest owing to ignorance of localities my narrative tend to become vague and meaningless, I must describe their natural features and relative positions, as indeed I attempt to do throughout my whole work."³⁵⁴

Polybius, it is imagined, might have considered Livy less than exemplary in all of these regards. Modern scholars, who are usually neither public servants nor military leaders, do not pay too much attention to these ancient requirements. In ancient times, however, access to public records and an understanding of military actions proved vital to the worth of a historian. Modern scholars, though, have recognized Livy's shortcomings as a historian less meticulous in his approach than Thucydides or Sallust. Syme, in yet another definitive biography, this one on Tacitus, observes,

Admirable as Livy is in the eloquence of a speech, in descriptive colouring, and in narrative movement, he shows no comparable skill when events have to be grouped and interrelated – and no instinct for historical structure. For disposition as for material he is content on the whole to follow his sources.³⁵⁵

It is Livy's coloring of events, eloquence, and narrative movement that make him a pleasure to read. Quintilian, writing in the late first century AD, considered Livy the Roman Herodotus;³⁵⁶ Cicero looked for a historian who

³⁵³ Polyb. 20.12.8. The reference here is to a fragment: "On the value of evidence based on the eyes." See Walbank, *Commentary* (Oxford: 1979), 3.87.

³⁵⁴ Polyb. 5.21.4-5.

³⁵⁵ Ronald Syme, *Tacitus* (Oxford: 1958), 1.148.

³⁵⁶ Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.101.

would speak of Rome's greatness in a lasting and comprehensive work.³⁵⁷ He did not particularly care for Thucydides and probably would have had a similar take on Sallust. It is possible that he would have been satisfied with Livy.³⁵⁸

Syme's observations on Livy delineate the two schools of scholarship regarding his work,³⁵⁹ neither of which will be addressed at any length here. Both, however, should be mentioned since they can help determine how Thucydides may have had any impact on Livy.³⁶⁰ The first, *Quellenforschung*, was an effort by German fifteenth and early twentieth century scholars to identify Livy's different literary sources, how they were used, and to get some sense of the historian's methodology. The finding of this work was that Livy borrowed heavily and that his method in historical research was limited to written historical sources.³⁶¹ The second school generally argued for Livy's reworking of sources and investigated his attention to rhetorical and stylistic elements. Livy is not by

³⁵⁷ Cic. *De or.* 2.33.62-64, and *Leg.* 1.1.5-6, are the typical references to support Cicero's desire for a "Roman Herodotus" (e.g., Mellor, *Roman Historians* (1999), 51: "Cicero hoped above all for a Roman Herodotus," and T. J. Luce, *Livy: The Composition of His History* (Princeton: 1977), xvii n5). Cicero does not explicitly state this quest for a "Roman Herodotus"; he asserts that a historian should exhibit *ornatio* and *ornamenta* (adornment and embellishment).

³⁵⁸ Mellor, *Roman Historians* (1999), 51, believes that Livy brought "Cicero's prescriptions for Roman historiography into reality." Luce, *Livy* (1977), xvii n5, on the other hand, says, "That Livy was not the man Cicero was seeking may be true, although I doubt that Cicero would have found Tacitus more congenial."

³⁵⁹ Syme, *Tacitus* (1958), 1.148.

³⁶⁰ An excellent summary of the two schools has been recounted in Gary B. Miles, *Livy: Reconstructing Early Rome* (Ithaca and London: 1995), 1-7. Much of this paragraph is owed to his introductory remarks. See also Luce, *Livy* (1977), xv-xxvii, 185.

³⁶¹ P. G. Walsh, *Livy: His Historical Aims and Methods* (Cambridge: 1961), 110-111, gives example of instances where Livy does not make the effort to gather information from easily accessible documents, inscriptions, or locations.

any means to be considered a “scissors and paste” historian,³⁶² but rather one who, to the best of his ability, offered a reasonable historical explanation while at the same time presenting a narrative in a worthy literary setting.³⁶³

Even so, the influence of Thucydides on his work is great. This influence cannot be dismissed simply because Livy pillaged the works of his predecessors and by arguing that Thucydides was simply another source.³⁶⁴ It is apparent that the literary relationship is deeper than that. On the surface, Thucydides’ influence is obvious in a number of borrowings: the account of the plague in Syracuse and Athens, characterizations of personalities, the escapes from Acerae and Plataea, military tactics of Marcellus at Nola and Brasidas at Amphipolis, moral decay in Rome and civil affliction in Syracuse, as well as Rome after Cannae and Athens after Syracuse.³⁶⁵ A more complicated parallel can be seen in two debates: between Fabius and Scipio during the Second Punic War (218-201 BC), and the other between Nicias and Alcibiades.³⁶⁶

³⁶² Collingwood, *Idea of History* (1993), 37, thus describes Livy.

³⁶³ Walsh, *Livy* (1961), 287.

³⁶⁴ E.g., in his narrative on the Second Punic War (Bks. 21-25) he famously cites his sources: Concilius Alibiatus (21.38.3), Fabius Pictor (22.7.4), Piso (25.39.12-13), and Clodius Licinus (29.22.10); in another part of the history (33.10), questioning casualty figures given by Claudius Quadrigarius and Valerius Antias, Livy picks a lesser number: “I do so not because it is the smallest number, but because Polybius is here my chosen authority – he is reliable on all matters to do with Roman history, especially events in Greece.”

³⁶⁵ Plague: Livy 25.26.7-15. and Thuc. 2.47-54.1; Characterizations: Livy 22.25.3-6. and Thuc. 4.27.4-5 (Metellus and Cleon), Livy 22.27.1-4 and Thuc. 5.7.3 (Varro and Cleon); Livy 22.23.4 and Thuc. 1.13.1 (Fabius and Pericles); Escapes: Livy 23.17.5-6 and Thuc. 3.22-24; Tactics: 23.16.10-14. and Thuc. 5.7-8, 10; Rome and Syracuse: Livy 24.18.2 and Thuc. 24.29.3; and Rome and Athens: Livy 22.54.7 and Thuc. 8.1.1-3.

³⁶⁶ Fabius and Scipio: Livy 28: 40-44, and Nicias and Alcibiades: Thuc. 6: 9-18, 20, 23. This is a rather famous parallel cited by a number of scholars, most of which are of the *Quellenforschung* tradition and cited by Barbara Saylor Rodgers, “Great Expeditions: Livy on Thucydides,” *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 116 (1986), 338n13 and 339n18. Rodgers

Influence is evident in Livy's treatment of speeches. His Book 28 deals with the debates between Fabius and Scipio over Scipio's position that Rome should take the war directly to Carthage; Thucydides' Book 6 relates the debates in Athens about the reasonableness of Alcibiades' desire to extend Athenian power to the island of Sicily at a time when Athens is at peace with Sparta. Historically, there is an interesting parallel even before the debates. Fabius earned the name "Cunctator" for his delaying tactics, which gave Rome respite after the disastrous Roman defeat at Cannae in 216 BC;³⁶⁷ the peace that Athens was experiencing was an intermission (421-413 BC) in the thirty-four year long Peloponnesian War, and was constructed by Nicias.³⁶⁸ It is not surprising that Livy would expand on this coincidence. The debates take place before the Roman Senate and the Athenian Assembly:

Fabius: I am quite aware, senators, that many of you regard the question before us today as already decided... expressing my dissent from those who think that we ought at once to invade Africa. Livy 28.40.3-5

Nicias: Although this assembly was convened to consider the preparations to be made for the sailing to Sicily, I think, notwithstanding, that we should still examine whether it be better to send out the ships at all. Thuc. 6.9.1

Fabius: Young men may call it timidity and indolence if they please, as long as we have no cause to regret that though the counsels of others have seemed at first sight more attractive, experience shows that mine are better. Livy 28.40.5

Nicias: And yet, individually, I gain honor by such a course, and fear as

offers a well-considered deconstruction of the debates between the principals and a near line-by-line comparison of the two histories.

³⁶⁷ J. Briscoe, "Fabius Maximus Verucosus, Wuintus," *OCD*³, 583.

³⁶⁸ Henry Dickinson Westlake and Simon Hornblower, "Nicias (1)," *OCD*³, 1041.

little as other men for my person...I will, therefore, content myself with showing that your ardor is untimely, and your ambition not easily accomplished. Thuc. 6.9.2

Fabius: I have never preferred my own reputation to the interests of the State. Livy 28.41.1

Nicias: I have never spoken against my honor to gain acclaim. Thuc. 6.9.2

Fabius: Your natural course will be to defend your own country before you go to attack the enemy's. Let there be peace in Italy before there is war in Africa; let our own fears be banished before we make others tremble. Livy 28.41.2-9

Nicias: I affirm, then that you leave many enemies behind you here to go there far away and bring more back with you...not to think of running risks with a country place so critically, or of grasping at another empire before we have secured the one we have already. Thuc. 6.10.1. 5

Fabius: As matters now are, the public exchequer is unable to support two armies in Italy and also in Africa, we have nothing left from which to equip a fleet and furnish it with supplies, and over and above all this who can fail to see what great dangers would be incurred? Livy 28.41.11-12

Comparison to the last remarks by Fabius can be made to a second speech by Nicias describing the great expense needed to carry the expedition forth, hoping that the extravagance of the undertaking will persuade the Athenians to reconsider and change their minds.³⁶⁹ Notwithstanding that in each historical instance the decision to set out has been determined, both Nicias and Fabius speak their true opinion without concerns for their own reputation or honor; they both state the danger of dividing the strength of their forces, and argue that one front should be secured before opening another; they both maintain the costs of the intended expeditions are prohibitive.

³⁶⁹ Thuc. 6.19.2, 21.1-23.1.

In an inventive turn by Livy, though the Thucydidean text is not in front of his readers, he has Fabius bring it to their attention:

The daylight would fail me if I attempted to enumerate the kings and captains who by their rash invasion of their enemy's territory have brought the most crushing defeat on themselves and their armies. Athens, a city most sensible and wise, listened to the advice of a young man of high birth and equally high ability, and sent a great fleet to Sicily before it had disposed of the war at home, and in one naval battle the flourishing republic was forever ruined. Livy 28.41.17³⁷⁰

They both include in their speeches an attack on the ambition of their adversaries:

Fabius: I hold the view that P. Cornelius Scipio was elected consul not for his own private ends, but for us and the commonwealth, and that armies are raised to guard this city and the soil of Italy, and not for consuls to transport to any part of the world they please in the arrogant style of kings and despots. Livy 28.41.11-12

Nicias: And if there be any man here, overjoyed at being chosen to command, who urges you to make the expedition, merely for ends of his own – especially if he is still too young to command – ...remember that such persons injure the public fortune while they squander their own, and that this is a matter of importance, and not for a young man to decide or hastily to take in hand. Thuc. 6.12.2

Similarly, Fabius had earlier noted Scipio's youth, saying, "What rivalry can exist between myself and a man who is not even as old as my son?"³⁷¹

The Thucydidean model continues to work for Livy in the comparison of responses to Fabius and Nicias by Scipio and Alcibiades, respectively. Fabius has not convinced anyone that he is not motivated by jealousy of Scipio;

³⁷⁰ Fabius is mistaken that the Sicilian defeat signaled the final Athenian defeat in the Peloponnesian War. While that is significant to historians, it is not important to orators.

³⁷¹ Livy 28.40.9.

Alcibiades must speak since Nicias has attacked him.³⁷² Scipio and Alcibiades both declare that they are driven by honor and fame, for themselves and for their state.³⁷³ They both proclaim their youth and declare that their fellow-citizens should embrace their energy.³⁷⁴ They stress the ease of the anticipated conflict and the fickleness of their opponents.³⁷⁵ They both cite evidences from antiquity: Scipio recalls Agathocles, king of Syracuse, who, after Sicily had been wasted by Carthaginians, sailed across the sea and turned the tide of war; Alcibiades reckoned that it was the Athenian fleet that proved superior to the Mede and won an empire.³⁷⁶ Finally, a successful Roman expedition will cause Hannibal to depart from Italy, and a successful Athenian expedition will show the Spartans how unimportant the peace is to them.³⁷⁷

There are differences in their situations, but these only stress the creativity of Livy in the parallel speeches: Rome is fighting for survival against Carthage, Athens is at this time victorious in her recent struggles with Sparta; the Roman Senate has not yet approved the expedition, the Athenian Assembly has; the Romans wished to secure their homeland, the Athenians wished to expand their influence; and the most significant difference was that Romans are not

³⁷² Livy 28.43.2-3; Thuc. 6.16.1.

³⁷³ Livy 28.43.4-8; Thuc. 6.16.

³⁷⁴ Livy 28.43.9.16; Thuc. 6.16.6-17.1

³⁷⁵ Livy 28.44.4-5; Thuc. 6.17.2-6.

³⁷⁶ Livy 28.43.20; Thuc. 6.18.7.

³⁷⁷ Livy 28.44.9-11; Thuc. 6.18.4. These lines also mention the strength of the Roman army and the Athenian fleet.

Greeks.³⁷⁸ It is for this reason that Livy purposefully has Fabius bring up the memory of the disastrous Sicilian expedition. Livy's readers are reminded of this most important difference: where Greeks failed, Romans succeeded.

The exceptional Roman nature is the history that Livy wants to tell:

Unless, however, I am misled by my affection for my undertaking, there has never existed any commonwealth great in power, with a purer morality, more fertile in good examples; or any state in which avarice and luxury have been so late in making their inroads, or poverty and frugality so highly and continuously honored, showing so clearly that the less wealth men possessed the less they coveted. Livy *Praef.* 11

It is a history, however, of a great empire in decline:

The subjects to which I would ask each of my readers to devote his earnest attention are these – the life and morals of the community; the men and the qualities by which through domestic policy and foreign war dominion was won and extended. Then as the standard of morality gradually lowers, let him follow the decay of the national character, observing how at first it slowly sinks, then slips downward more and more rapidly, and finally begins to plunge into headlong ruin, until he reaches these days, in which we can bear neither our diseases nor their remedies. Livy *Praef.* 9

Though he notes that Rome was later than any other state to decline in its virtues and morals, it is evident to Livy that decline is inevitable. Publishing the first ten books of his history no later than 25 BC,³⁷⁹ he witnessed the consolidation of Octavian's power and his ascendancy to Augustus. Livy followed the ancient tradition of opening his work with a preface, but neither Thucydides nor even Sallust displayed the same level of pessimism about future possibilities that is

³⁷⁸ Rodgers, "Great Expeditions" (1986), 339.

³⁷⁹ T. J. Luce, "The Dating of Livy's First Decade," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 96 (1965), 209-240.

evident in Livy.³⁸⁰

It can be plausibly argued that scholars have judged Livy's research method too harshly.³⁸¹ Livy says at the opening of his Preface that two well-established principles will guide him in his writing: accuracy and style.³⁸² The complaints regarding his work have more to do with the former than the latter. In his defense, there are few cases where Livy takes the testimony of a past historian as accurate without making a comment of reservation,³⁸³ and he notes the difficulty he has sorting out the various and contradictory sources.³⁸⁴ Livy's work covered Roman history from its origins to the first decade BC. It totaled 142 books, of which only books 1-10 and 21-45 survive. Book 45 concludes in the mid-second century BC, one hundred years before Livy's birth. What survives of Livy is not a contemporary history like those of Thucydides or Sallust. His heavy reliance on extant histories is understandable considering the seven-hundred-year scope of the entire work. Perhaps academics would find in the lost portions of Livy's history talents historical research and composition equaling those of Sallust, Polybius, and Thucydides. Perhaps not. Livy says in his preface,

I have very little doubt, too, that for the majority of my readers the earliest times and those immediately succeeding will possess little attraction; they will hurry on to these modern days in which the might of a long paramount nation is wasting by internal decay. I, on the other hand, shall look for a

³⁸⁰ Luce, "Livy's First Decade" (1965), 234-238, discusses whether the original Preface was different from the one in subsequent publications. Luce's concerns are of course relative to the dating of the beginning, not the tone.

³⁸¹ Luce, *Livy* (1977), 156.

³⁸² Livy *Praef.* 2.

³⁸³ Miles, *Livy* (1995), 60 n72, notes Livy 9.18.5.

³⁸⁴ Livy 38.56.1.

further reward of my labours in being able to close my eyes to the evils which our generation has witnessed for so many years; so long, at least, as I am devoting all my thoughts to retracing those pristine records, free from all the anxiety which can disturb the historian of his own times even if it cannot warp him from the truth. Livy *Praef.* 4-5

It is clear then that Livy's close inspection of contemporary events may have proved painful to him, and may have inhibited a dispassionate narrative. In part, it is the nature of the Roman historiographical approach that is, at least in the modern sense, Livy's own undoing. To Romans, Thucydides' pragmatic analysis and the emotionally removed investigation would have seemed amoral; for the Romans, accuracy was subordinated to the appearance of truth and the important issues were politics and morals. That Livy was partial to his homeland would have been understandable, and expected.³⁸⁵

Cornelius Tacitus (c. AD 56-after 118) was born during the reign of Nero, the last of the Julio-Claudians. As a young boy he witnessed the wars between the four claimants upon the death of Nero in 68. From this "year of the four emperors" he watched the Flavian dynasty (AD 69-96) solidify its position of imperial control. He conducted an orderly public career under Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian. Then as a Senator, Tacitus rose to suffect consul in the short reign of Nerva in 97.³⁸⁶ It was in the following year that he wrote and published his first two works, the *Agricola* and the *Germania*. He served as the proconsul of Asia for the years 112-114 under the reign of Trajan (AD 98-117). It was after this

³⁸⁵ Mellor, *Roman Historians* (1999), 191, 192, 199.

³⁸⁶ Under the Empire, consuls ceased to hold the remnant of the Republic's highest magisterial office for the entire year. Those consuls, appointed after the original pair of consuls, were *suffecti*, positions that were more gestures of honor than their former positions of authority. Piero Treves and Barbara M. Levick, "suffect, *suffectio*," *OCD*³, 1453.

service in Asia that he started on the *Histories* and the *Annales*.³⁸⁷

During his life of deeply engaged active service he noted the rise of absolutism and its effects on nations and individuals. He recorded Rome's transition from the Augustan principate to the tyranny of Domitian, as well as the Roman shift from compliance to acquiescence.³⁸⁸ Like Sallust, he viewed his work as a continuation of his public life, and believed that history should be useful and moral.³⁸⁹

Like most ancient historians, Tacitus begins his works with a preface stating his purpose and his commitment to impartiality.³⁹⁰ One departure that has no precedent is that he begins both the *Annals* and the *History* without mentioning his own name; instead he gives the names of the consuls who were in office at the time each history begins:

Rome at the beginning was ruled by kings. Freedom and the consulship were established by Lucius Brutus. Tac. *Ann.* 1.1.1

I begin my work with the time when Servius Galba was consul for the second time with Titus Vinius for his colleague. Tac. *Hist.* 1.1.1

These openings show that, while Sallust seeks *gloria* and *fama* in the writing of his works, for Tacitus the emphasis in the *Annales* and the *Historiae* is on Rome. Indeed, "*urbem Romam*" are the first words of the *Annales*.

³⁸⁷ Ronald Haithwaite Martin, "Tacitus," *OCD*³, 1469; John Brian Campbell, "Trajan (Marcus Ulpius Traianus)," *OCD*³, 1543.

³⁸⁸ Lidia Storoni Mazzolani, *Empire Without End: Three Historians of Rome* (New York and London: 1976) 146.

³⁸⁹ Ronald Mellor, *Tacitus* (New York and London: 1993) 1.

³⁹⁰ The *Germania* is an exception. Here, interestingly enough, his first line, "Undivided Germany is separated from the Gauls, Rhaetians, and Pannonians by the rivers Rhine and Danube," (Tac. *Germ.* 1.1) imitates the opening words of Caesar's in the *Bello Gallico*, "Gaul is a whole divided into three parts, one of which is inhabited by the Belgae, another by the Aquitani, and a third by a people called in their own tongue Celtae, in the Latin Galli" (Caes. *B. Gall.* 1.1).

There is in Tacitus another departure from Sallust and Sallust's model Thucydides. It is a subtle difference, and one that might not be expected from a person who had witnessed the events and times Tacitus had seen. In both of his predecessors there is a pessimism which suits well their themes of decline and fall, that of the Athenian Empire for Thucydides and of the Roman Republic for the Sallust. The *Historiae*, the first work of the two, covered the years AD 69-96. Of these years of the Flavians, Tacitus says, "I am entering on the history of a period rich in disasters, frightful in its wars, torn by civil strife, and even in peace full of horrors."³⁹¹ But after three decades of this period, he can say,

I have reserved as an employment for my old age, should my life be long enough, a subject at once more fruitful and less anxious in the reign of the Divine Nerva and the empire of Trajan, enjoying the rare happiness of times, when we may think what we please, and express what we think.
Tac. *Hist.* 1.1.1

It is a very optimistic statement. His histories, on the other hand, are, on the whole, sharp condemnations of the Empire. A line in the *Annales* is instructive as to how Tacitus might be read:

My purpose is not to relate at length every motion, but only such as were conspicuous for excellence or notorious for infamy. This I regard as history's highest function, to let no worthy action be uncommemorated, and to hold out the reprobation of posterity as a terror to evil words and deeds. Tac. *Ann.* 3.65.1³⁹²

A. J. Woodman, in his edition of the *Annales*, has noted that most interpreters of this line take Tacitus to be saying in part, "I deem the greatest

³⁹¹ Tac. *Hist.* 1.2.1.

³⁹² A. J. Woodman and R. H. Martin, eds., *The Annals of Tacitus, Book 3* (New York: 1996), 451, observe, "This sentence, one of the most famous in T., has been widely thought to sum up his historical writing, and the latter part of it has sometimes been used as the motto for his work."

function of history to be that virtues should not be silenced and that crooked words and deeds should be attended by dread from posterity and infamy.³⁹³ In addition to holding history as an exemplar for the present, as had been a purpose of Sallust and Thucydides, Tacitus is using the threat of future histories as a means to affect the present. Perhaps the fear of future judgment will be a motivation for present day good and virtuous actions; perhaps future emperors will rule better than the Julio-Claudians or the Flavians.³⁹⁴

Tacitus does share historiographical elements with Thucydides. On rare occasions, there are parts of Tacitus that appear to make direct allusions to Thucydides:

The ties of loyalty on the one hand, and the necessities of famine on the other, kept the besieged wavering between the alternatives of glory and infamy. While they thus hesitated, all usual and even unusual kinds of food failed them, for they had consumed their horses and beasts of burden and all the other animals, which, though unclean and disgusting, necessity compelled them to use. At last they tore up shrubs and roots and the grass that grew between the stones, and thus showed an example of patience under privations, till at last they shamefully tarnished the lustre of their fame by sending envoys to Civilis to beg for their lives. Tac. *Hist.* 4.60.1

Later on, one may say, the whole Hellenic world was convulsed; struggles being everywhere made by the popular leaders to bring in the Athenians, and by the oligarchs to introduce the Spartans. In peace there would have been neither the pretext not the wish to make such invitation; but in war... opportunities for bringing in the foreigner were never wanting to the revolutionary parties. The sufferings which revolution entailed upon the cities were many and terrible, such as have occurred and always will

³⁹³ Tacitus, *The Annals*, translated, with introduction and notes, A. J. Woodman (Indianapolis: 2004), 115 fn 136. For a fuller treatment, see A. J. Woodman, "Praecipuum Munus Annalium: The Construction, Convention, and Context of Annals 3.65.1," *Tacitus Reviewed* (Oxford: 1998), 86-103; T. J. Luce, "Tacitus on 'History's Highest Function': *Praecipuum Munus Annalium* (Ann. 3.65)," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* (Berlin) II 33.4 2904-2927.

³⁹⁴ It is without doubt only a coincidence that after Nerva, Trajan, and Hadrian (AD 96-138) was the succession of the Antonines (AD 138-180), known as "the Good Emperors."

occur as long as the nature of mankind remains the same; though in a severer or milder form, and varying in their symptoms, according to the variety of the particular cases. Thucy 3.82.1-2

Syme observed that the verdict of Dionysius of Halicarnassus regarding Thucydides could easily have been applied to Tacitus.³⁹⁵ His qualities conformed to the critic's estimation of Thucydides. However, Syme asserts, the qualities do not derive from Thucydides. It seems that the greatest of all Roman historians was unique not only for Latin historians but for all ancient historians as well.

³⁹⁵ Syme, *Tacitus* (1958), 1.358 fn.4; Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 24.

CONCLUSION

Thucydides proved to be a defining figure in the writing of history, innovative regarding what went before, and influential on what came after.³⁹⁶

Herodotus inherited the notion of inquiry from the Ionian philosophers and used it to invent a new form of narrative of past events. The epic poets and the writers of Greek tragedy shaped his narrative style. His work on the Persian Wars, a combination of fantastic stories, ethnography, and the sciences of the age, was an inquiry into the causes of the conflict and the telling of the great Hellenic victories.

Thucydides departed from Herodotus in many ways, but his most significant departure must be his choice to write on contemporary events. Because he immediately recognized the significance of the war between the Athenians and the Spartans, he started writing at once. That undertaking is strewn with difficulties, not the least of which is the lack of perspective. For this reason, Thucydides determined a more rigorous method, which necessarily took him beyond Herodotus. Granted there is reason to assume editing,³⁹⁷ but taken as a work in progress, Thucydides' surviving text includes remarkable innovations: choice of a starting date, the use of the annalistic chronology,

³⁹⁶ Bury, *Greek Historians* (1909), 147, states that Thucydides' work "marks the longest and most decisive step that has ever been taken by a single man towards making history what it is today."

³⁹⁷ E.g., he states that Athens has lost the war at 2.65.12.

borrowed from the annals; an explicit explanation of the criteria to include events and speeches; application of unifying techniques (juxtaposition, prefiguration and repetition, contrast and reversal, and integration of speech and narrative); and most importantly an objective detachment from the narrative. All of these techniques in a narrative of contemporary events are extraordinary. In limiting his inquiry to war, politics, and the contemporary, Thucydides defined the subject matter for the historians considered in this thesis, but it was nearly impossible for them to reproduce the structure of Thucydides' work.

His influence on historians must have had been substantial given that there were no fewer than four continuators who picked up the unfinished history at the precise point where Thucydides broke off. Xenophon made an obvious effort to continue Thucydides' historical method and narrative treatment, and Cratippus apparently followed certain specifics of the Thucydidean method.³⁹⁸ The Oxyrhynchus historian embraced Thucydides' method, including the annual chronicling of events, accounts by personal observation and eyewitnesses, and a commitment to authorial detachment. Subsequent historians of the Hellenistic Age, influenced by the rhetorical leanings and the obsequious tenor of the age, did not, however, find in Thucydides a suitable model.³⁹⁹ The Hellenistic Age was a period of great variety and not a few contradictions: science and reason existed in the same space as the illogical and an irresistible attraction for the

³⁹⁸ At least in the first portion of the work, which concludes with the installation of the Thirty Tyrants.

³⁹⁹ Simon Hornblower, "The Fourth-Century and Hellenistic Reception of Thucydides," *JHS*, Vol. 115 (1995), 63.

incredible.⁴⁰⁰

It seems that there is, as A. W. Gomme noted, “a complete silence about Thucydides in what remains to us of ancient writers before the age of Cicero and Dionysius of Halicarnassus.”⁴⁰¹ This comment prompted a response by Simon Hornblower,⁴⁰² who argues that, though there is no specific reference to Thucydides except in his immediate continuators, Polybius being the only exception, there is plentiful evidence that other Greeks (e.g., Demosthenes, Aeschines, Lysias, Aeneas, Tacitus, Callisthenes, Plato, Aristotle, Philistus, Ephorus, Hellanicus, and Androtion) studied Thucydides, as shown in their treatment of specific historical events (e.g., plague and ostracism), foreign affairs, the relationship of poetry to history and arguments on morals and ethics. Lack of interest in Thucydides’ history may have been due to his rigorous style and the fact that he “kept the gods out” of his work. The former made Thucydides difficult to read and tougher to emulate, the latter unpalatable to the tastes of the time.⁴⁰³ Hornblower raises another consideration worth noting here: if the greatness of the Greeks was conceived in their struggles against the Persians (by Athens, Sparta, the Hellenic League, and finally by Alexander), then the dealings with the Great King, specifically by the Athenian Alcibiades and the out-of-text Spartan

⁴⁰⁰ Emilio Gabba, “True History and False History in Classical Antiquity,” *JRS*, Vol. 71 (1981), 55.

⁴⁰¹ Gomme, *Commentary* (1962), III.523.

⁴⁰² Simon Hornblower, “Hellenistic Reception of Thucydides,” (1995), 47-68. This is a masterful historiographical review of the age; Hornblower cites, in nearly 100 footnotes, an equal number of modern historians, and three-dozen ancient writers.

⁴⁰³ Hornblower, “Hellenistic Reception” (1995), 63-64. Hornblower notes that Polybius was not completely immune to the requirements of the age. In the Greek’s history, for example, Philip V of Macedon is pursued by the Furies (Polyb. *Hist.* 23.10.2.).

Lysander, may have been too much of an embarrassment for Hellenistic sensibilities.⁴⁰⁴ Moreover, the Hellenistic Age was a time of kings and of histories written about kings and kingdoms. There must have been a certain irrelevancy and insignificance in a war between two city-states.⁴⁰⁵

It is appropriate here to examine briefly the single great Hellenistic historian. Polybius (c. 200-c. 118 BC) lived in the Achaean city of Megalopolis until sometime after 168 BC. As a result of the Roman expansion into Greece and victories over Perseus of Macedonia and the Achaean League, he was numbered among the hostages taken to Rome, living in, and at times serving, the growing empire until the end of his life.⁴⁰⁶ Polybius is a pivotal figure in any consideration of ancient historiography, and he embodies much of Thucydides' approach. Though in Polybius there are departures, he shared a number of parallels with Thucydides: Polybius had his military and political careers cut short by exile,⁴⁰⁷ he wrote contemporary history,⁴⁰⁸ he wrote to instruct in the art of government, and he came to writing history as an extension of his public life.

Polybius' *History* is five times the length of Thucydides' work and took over fifty years to complete.⁴⁰⁹ His original intention was to relate the history of

⁴⁰⁴ Hornblower, "Hellenistic Reception of Thucydides" (1995), 61.

⁴⁰⁵ Hornblower, "Hellenistic Reception of Thucydides" (1995), 66.

⁴⁰⁶ A brief summary of his life can be found in F. W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius* (Oxford: 1957), 1-6.

⁴⁰⁷ F. W. Walbank, *Polybius* (Berkeley: 1972), 41.

⁴⁰⁸ Walbank, *Polybius* (1972), 42.

⁴⁰⁹ His total work was to consist of 40 books, with the last book comprising a chronological index (Polyb. 39.8.8). The first five books survive in full. See Timothy E. Duff, *The Greek and Roman Historians* (London: 2003), 57; and Walbank, *Polybius* (1972) 25.

Rome from the beginning of the Second Punic War, in 220 BC, to the Roman conquest of Macedonia, in 168 BC.⁴¹⁰ Like Thucydides, he prefaces the beginning of his work with a brief historical background, offering an account of the relations between Rome and Carthage, including the First Punic War (264-241 BC), and a history of his own Achaean League. After completion of his original objective, he simply notes that he will continue his work, bringing “the whole narrative of events to a conclusion, narrating finally the expedition of Antiochus Epiphanes against Egypt, the war with Perseus, and the abolition of the Macedonian monarchy.”⁴¹¹ This does not indicate a change in his purpose, but a rather a declaration that he will carry his history to Roman annexation of the Macedonian monarchy in 146 BC.

Acutely aware of the prevailing frivolous writings of the age, he had set the purpose of his work in the History's opening lines:

For who is so worthless or indolent as not to wish to know by what means and under what system of polity the Romans in less than fifty-three years have succeeded in subjecting nearly the whole inhabited world to their sole government – a thing unique in history? Or who again is there so passionately devoted to other spectacles or studies as to regard anything as of greater moment than the acquisition of this knowledge? Polyb. 1.1.5-6.

This basic purpose remained unchanged throughout the entire work. The world that Rome inhabited was universal, and, because of this, Polybius set out to write a universal history, coordinating events of Rome with those of Carthage, the

³⁹⁹ Bury, *Greek Historians* (1909), 192.

⁴¹¹ Polyb. 3.3.7-8.

Greeks, and the Hellenistic monarchies.⁴¹² As Thucydides had done, he points to the uniqueness of the moment. He goes on to state that his work is distinct in showing how

Fortune has guided almost all the affairs of the world in one direction and has forced them to incline towards one and the same end; a historian should likewise bring before his readers under one synoptical view the operations by which she has accomplished her general purpose. Polyb. 1.4.1-2.

Polybius arguably makes more of an effort to explain his purposes than any other ancient historian.

His statement of method is no less complete; Book 12, for example, is almost entirely devoted to method.

The mere statement of a fact may excite our interest, but is of no benefit to us. But when we add the cause of it, the study of history becomes fruitful. For by transferring similar events to our own times we gain the means of forming presentiments about what is going to happen. This allows us, on the basis of previous events – sometimes by taking precautions so that they will not be repeated and sometimes by imitating what was done then – to face with more confidence the difficulties that confront us. Polyb. 12.25.2-3.

This statement has two parallels in Thucydides.⁴¹³ The first is Thucydides' desire that his work "be judged useful by those inquirers who desire an exact knowledge of the past as an aid to understanding of the future."⁴¹⁴ Secondly, Polybius

⁴¹² Duff, *Historians* (2003), 57.

⁴¹³ Duff, *Historians* (2003), 59-60.

⁴¹⁴ Thuc. 1.22.4. This connection seems to be made in the face of overwhelming contrary interpretations: F. W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius* (Oxford: 1967), 1.386, agrees with Gomme, *Commentary* (1959), 1.149-50, that (per Walbank), "Thucydides is referring to events in his future, not the reader's, and nowhere claims that his history is to act as a practical statesman's vade-mecum." I agree that Thucydides did not write the history as a "carry-around" guidebook for future politicians, but his work narrates obvious lessons for the political scientist and political historian to consider.

emphasizes the importance of determining the causes of events. Furthermore, he makes the distinction, as does Thucydides, between actual causes and the supposed pretexts or excuses made by warring parties.⁴¹⁵ F. W. Walbank states justly, "Polybius stands for a return to the aims and methods of Thucydides."⁴¹⁶

Probably nowhere more does Polybius better illustrate his rejection of the sensationalism of the Hellenistic historiography than in his explanation of the type of history he is writing, *pragmatike istoria*.⁴¹⁷ Simply put, it can be defined as "contemporary political and military history."⁴¹⁸ Polybius identifies three areas of the historian's labor:

The first being the industrious study of memoirs and other documents and a comparison of their contents, the second the survey of cities, places, rivers, lakes, and in general all the peculiar features of land and sea and the distances of one place from another, and the third being the review of political events. Polyb. 12.25.1.

A few lines before, he remarks on the necessity of eyewitness and the guidelines for using them:

For since many events occur at the same time in different places, and one man cannot be in several places at one time, nor is it possible for a single man to have seen with his own eyes every place in the world and all the peculiar features of different places, the only thing left for an historian is to inquire from as many people as possible, to believe those worthy of belief and to be an adequate critic of the reports that reach him. Polyb. 12.4.3.

⁴¹⁵ Thuc. 1.23.5-6; Polyb. 22.18.6. Donald Walter Baronowski, "Polybius on the Causes of the Third Punic War," *CP*, Vol. 90, No.1 (Jan., 1995), 16-17; Walbank, *Commentary* (1979), 3.208. Duff, *Historians* (2003), 59, says that the Polybius' use of the terms "beginnings" (*arche*), "actual 'causes'" (*aitia*), and "pretexts" (*prophasis*), and his explanation of them "is reminiscent of Thucydides, probably deliberately."

⁴¹⁶ Walbank, *Polybius* (1972), 40.

⁴¹⁷ Polyb. 9.14-5, 2.4.

⁴¹⁸ Walbank, *Polybius* (1972), 56.

All of the foregoing discussion of Polybius arguably places him in a position of being a direct heir and continuator of the Thucydidean method. Additional shared elements are their chronological format, their use of speeches, their attitude about the distant past, their commitment to truth, their attitudes regarding the relative unimportance of style, and, for the most part, their use of the third person voice in narrations of their own activities in their histories.⁴¹⁹ The adoption of these principles has been considered “as marking the triumph of the Thucydidean school at Rome.”⁴²⁰

The Roman lack of solid foundation stories was due in large part to the comparatively late arrival of epic poetry in Roman culture. Where Herodotus had the works of Homer and Hesiod upon which to build, the first Roman historians had no Latin counterparts. The Roman historical genre, therefore, developed in a substantially different manner than did the Greek.

The great Latin historians, Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus, all borrowed to a greater or lesser extent from their Greek counterparts. On the whole, Hellenistic

⁴¹⁹ Chronology: Polybius adopted the “Olympiad years” to frame his chronology, Walbank, *Polybius* (1957), 1.35; Speeches: considered an integral part of the narrative, Polyb. 12.25b.1 and 14.1a.3; Distant Past: considered not only obscure, but inconsequential, Walbank, *Polybius* (1972), 42; Truth: “For just as a living creature which has lost its eyesight is wholly incapacitated, so if History is stripped of her truth all that is left is but an idle tale.” Polyb. 1.14.6 and 3.20.5; Style: “We should indeed bestow care and concern on the proper manner of reporting events... But we should not regard this as the first and leading object to be aimed at by sober-minded men.” Polyb. 16.17.10; Third Person Voice: In referring to himself, Polybius used the third person when he was an actor in his history, and the first person when he wrote as a historian. From 36.11-12, however, he makes no distinction whether as an actor or a writer, at which point he says that because of his increased involvement in the events, he wishes to avoid “frequent repetition of my name.” Marincola, *Ancient Historiography* (1997), 192, observes that because of this change, the work lost the “perspective of history” and became to look “suspiciously like memoirs.” See also, F. W. Walbank, *Polybius, Rome and the Hellenistic World* (Cambridge and New York: 2002), 12-13.

⁴²⁰ Walbank, *Polybius* (1972), 42, refers here to an assessment made by Arnaldo Momigliano, *Terzo Contributo Alla Storia Degli Studi Classici e del Mondo Antico* (Rome: 1966), 1.18.

historiography did not make inroads into the Roman genre, and certainly not with Sallust. His attachment to the style (especially in the treatment of the speeches in the *Bellum Catilinae*) and method of Thucydides justly recall a student before his master. But his handling of causation suffered due to his obsession with self-justification. While Livy charted his efforts with Herodotus in mind, he too constructed his history under the influence of Thucydides and his Thucydidean achievement in the juxtapositions and parallels of the Fabius and Nicias speeches, for example, is noteworthy. His aversion to contemporary events, on the other hand, is unfortunate. The work of Tacitus is a twist on the use of history that was apparent in Thucydides, Sallust, and Polybius. He hopes that the historical exercise will be sufficient to coerce self-interested rulers to rule well, out of concern for future judgment. As Syme asserts, the verdict of Dionysius of Halicarnassus on Thucydides befits Tacitus also:

Tacitus took possession of the Latin language, bent it to his will, and pushed to the utter limits all that it knew or promised of energy, gravity, and magnificence. If the qualities of Tacitus need commendation from antiquity, it may be discovered in a Greek writer's verdict upon Thucydides.⁴²¹

The principal domestic influences on these three Roman historians were Fabius Pictor and Cato the Elder, nationalistic and moralizing in their stories. The effect of both of these men is evident in all three of the historians. As indicated above, the didactic messages of the later historians likely compensated for Rome's scarcity of moral philosophers. It is this idea of philosophy in the ancient historiography of Rome and Greece that needs to be addressed now.

Writing nearly a century after Thucydides, Aristotle famously considered

⁴²¹ Syme, *Tacitus* (1958), 1.358; Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 24.

the differences between poetry and history:

Poetry is both more philosophical and more serious than history, since poetry speaks more of universals, history of particulars. A “universal” comprises the kind of speech or action which belongs by probability or necessity to a certain kind of character – something which poetry aims at despite its addition of particular names. A “particular,” by contrast, is (for example) what Alcibiades did or did not experience. Arist. *Poet.* 9.

The “universals” that Aristotle speaks of here are those broad categories and concepts that individuals use to comprehend and explain the world in which they live.⁴²² It is, Aristotle insists, the embodiment of these universals to which poetry, like philosophy, aims. History, he says, does not. This statement has understandably raised the ire of modern historians who have done their best to dismiss it.⁴²³ G. E. M. de Ste. Croix declares that “this passage is perfectly explicit and unqualified, and it is wrong to seek to explain it away.”⁴²⁴ However, even to the ancients, there were differences in historical quality between, say, early Roman or Greek annals and Polybius, or history written in Hellenistic doggerel and the writing of Tacitus.

A good history will not simply be a statement of facts, that is, who served when and where, or who won a specific war or battle. It is not even, as Aristotle contends, the actions or sufferings of an individual. As interesting as the facts might be, they are no more interesting than the questions asked about them. The hallmark of a good historian is that, in consideration of particulars, he will also

⁴²² Stephen Halliwell, *The Poetics of Aristotle: Translation and Commentary* (Chapel Hill: 1987), 106.

⁴²³ By introducing, for example, a later statement where Aristotle refers to “our usual historians” (*Poetics* 23), as if to argue that Aristotle makes a distinction between good and bad historians.

⁴²⁴ G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, “Aristotle on History and Poetry,” *Essays on Aristotle’s Poetics*, ed. Amelie Oksenberg Rorty (Princeton: 1992), 23.

express exactly those universals that Aristotle deems the sole province of poetry. The Latin historians certainly dealt with universals in questioning the morals and ethics of their time. They were concerned with the health of the state, and they wrote their histories as explanations of what was already apparent to them.

But while they mimic the style and words of Thucydides, their histories lack his substance. Alan Wardman puts it this way:

The parallels between Herodotus and Livy, and Thucydides and Sallust, were mostly based on criteria of style; Romans did not see that Herodotus and Thucydides were great historians because they tried to understand the causes that lay behind events.⁴²⁵

The reason for this is simple and at the same time nearly fatal: Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus each had an agenda; they all embraced a bias that dictated the tenor of their histories. Their works are apparent products of genius, but their histories do not internalize the philosophical questions into which Thucydides inquired. For Thucydides and Polybius, a Greek writing in a Roman world, history was a laboratory. Thucydides was genuinely puzzled, and he examined the experience of the war for answers. He observed and inspected what had happened and asked legitimate questions, and he gives no hints that he knew the answers to these questions before his inquiry. His conclusions were as universal as anything Aristotle might have come up with. An unforgettable example is his description of war as a “violent teacher.”⁴²⁶ There is nothing in the later historians, perhaps excepting Polybius, as penetrating as this original thought.

Coming late to the craft of historical writing, the Latins held the Greeks in

⁴²⁵ Wardman, *Rome's Debt* (1976), 74.

⁴²⁶ Thuc. 3.82.2.

high regard. However, the Greeks' high standing was based more on criteria of rhetoric and style than on historical understanding; Roman judgments were rarely concerned with the quality of Greek historical insight.⁴²⁷ Thucydides invigorated the new genre of history with his inquiry into contemporary events. Aristotle's portrait of the universal was that which "comprises the kind of speech or action which belongs by probability or necessity to a certain kind of character."⁴²⁸ Portraying this universal is something Thucydides accomplished in his history far more effectively than any of the historians of antiquity. He also accomplished this by doing more than simply relating the words and actions of the particular.

With a nod to Aristotle's distinction between philosophy and history, it seems appropriate to close this thesis with the words of another philosopher. In a fair and lasting assessment, David Hume declared, "The first page of Thucydides is, in my opinion, the commencement of real history."⁴²⁹

⁴²⁷ Wardman, *Rome's Debt* (1976), 81, 101.

⁴²⁸ Arist. *Poet.* 9.

⁴²⁹ David Hume, *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary*, edited by Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis: 1985), 422.

EPILOGUE

ON THE DEATH OF THUCYDIDES⁴³⁰

Thucydides' history of the Peloponnesian War abruptly terminates in mid-sentence of what we call Book 8, with still seven years left in the event he is narrating. One historian of ancient Greece has stated, "The so-called 'evidence' from antiquity on Thucydides' death is worthless and speculation is futile."⁴³¹ This comment must have been offered with a great sense of irony, perhaps unintended, given that the remark is an early footnote to a chapter entitled "Books 'IX' and 'X': Thucydides' Plan." The comment, however, suggests the great composition question about when Thucydides composed the different parts of his history; *die Thukydideische Frage* dominated Thucydidean scholarship from the middle of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century.⁴³² In the final assessment, examination of the evidence of the time and circumstances of his death may be futile but it is not excluded as a proper subject of investigation.

Though Thucydides famously remarks in his opening lines that he started

⁴³⁰ Portions of which were given at the Southwestern Social Science Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, March 16, 2007. "On the Death of Thucydides" has been accepted for publication in *Ancient World*.

⁴³¹ Rawlings III, *Thucydides' History* (1981), 216 fn. 2.

⁴³² N.G.L. Hammond, "The Composition of Thucydides' History," *CQ*, vol. 34, no. 3/4 (Jul.-Oct.) 146.

immediately on his history of the Peloponnesian War (431–404),⁴³³ it must follow that a good measure of his efforts took place between two significant events: his exile from Athens in 424 and his death. The former event initiated the time available over the twenty years left in the war to visit its main centers and to interview, if not the principal characters in the struggle, then those persons who had first-hand knowledge. The latter event, to the loss of future readers and historians, was surely the cause of the abrupt termination of the work. The uncertainties surrounding the time and the circumstances of his death led to problematic conclusions by both modern and ancient historians.⁴³⁴ Thucydides is explicit throughout the work that he witnessed the final defeat of Athens, and there is some confidence that his forced exile from Athens ended in 404.⁴³⁵ It is only to this year, 404, that there is a sure record of his life. While speculation may be futile, it is, it seems, worth at least another review of the ancient evidences and the attendant questions, complications, and implications.

Some of the evidence that we have at our disposal is internal: Thucydides himself gives us hints as to when parts of his history were written. Other evidence is external. I would like to address first some external evidence.

One of his great modern commentators had this to say:

The story that Thucydides died by assassination either in Athens or in

⁴³³ All dates are BC, unless otherwise noted.

⁴³⁴ Thanks are due to Peter Green for noting, in a personal e-mail, only two remarkable scenarios: Adcock posits that Thucydides died in a shipwreck while delivering the final two chapters to his publisher and Munn surmised that Thucydides, into the 390s, wrote policy papers for the Athenian government. See Adcock, *Thucydides* (1963), 103; Mark Munn, *The School of History: Athens in the Age of Socrates* (Berkeley: 2000), 323.

⁴³⁵ Thuc. 5.26.2–3; G. Busolt, "Aufhebung der Verbannung," *Hermes* 33 (1898), 336–337.

Thrace has very little authority; but it certainly suits the end of his work – he died, seemingly, pen in hand. The three fourth-century historians had to pick up the pen and do what he had been prevented from doing...⁴³⁶

To the three historians to whom Gomme refers, Xenophon, Cratippus, and Theopompus, we may add the anonymous writer of the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*. All of these writers, the “continuator” of Thucydides, began their histories by recording events from 411, in itself evidence that the published history of Thucydides was incomplete.⁴³⁷ The moment that each undertook his work would, of course, restrict the possible limits of the *terminus ante quem* of Thucydides’ active composition, which we have to assume was until his death. Of the four, only Xenophon and Cratippus and perhaps the historian from Oxyrhynchus were contemporaries of Thucydides.⁴³⁸ It has been concluded, rightly so, that the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* historian could not have started his work prior to 386 though arguments have pushed even that forward to 356.⁴³⁹ That leaves Cratippus and Xenophon.

Cratippus, it seems, wrote a little later than Thucydides and a little earlier than Xenophon. Plutarch, in chapter one of his *De gloria Atheniensium*, mentions him between Thucydides and Xenophon.⁴⁴⁰ Lacking other convincing contrary

⁴³⁶ A. W. Gomme, *More Essays in Greek History and Literature* (Oxford: 1962), 127.

⁴³⁷ Marincola, *Ancient Historiography* (1997), 289.

⁴³⁸ Theopompus of Chios was not born until 378 and flourished as a writer in the late fourth century.

⁴³⁹ McKechnie and Kern, *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* (1988), 85-87, 154; F. Jacoby and P. Maas, “The Authorship of the *Hellenica of Oxyrhynchus*,” *CQ*, vol. 44, no. 1/2 (Jan.- Apr. 1950), 1; Bruce, *Commentary* (1967) 4.

⁴⁴⁰ Plut. *De glor. Ath.* 1; William K. Prentice, “Thucydides and Cratippus,” *CP*, vol. 22, no. 4 (Oct. 1927), 407.

support, this is likely a safe observation as to the chronology of the three. Additional efforts to narrow the date of Cratippus' writing are unfortunately deficient. This leads us to Xenophon.

Xenophon unsatisfactorily takes up where Thucydides left off; his account of the last years of the war is superficial compared to the former work.⁴⁴¹ It has been noted that it gives the impression that Xenophon is trying to flesh out the events based on transient memory.⁴⁴² Indeed, compared to the rest of the *Hellenica*, which relates events after the Peloponnesian War, there is an obvious break in organization, manner and continuity. The question is, when did Xenophon start his *Hellenica*? In all probability, Xenophon was born between 430 and 425.⁴⁴³ It is likely that he served in the cavalry under the oligarchy of "The Thirty" in 403;⁴⁴⁴ he enlisted in Cyrus' ill-fated attempt to take the Persian throne in 401, returning to the mainland in 399. Evidence shows that Xenophon was most likely exiled from Athens during the upheavals contemporaneous with the trials of Andocides and Socrates in 399.⁴⁴⁵ He entered the service of the Spartan King Ageselaus in the outbreak of the war between Sparta and Persia in 399. It is logical that at the time of his retirement to his Spartan barony of Scillus, perhaps

⁴⁴¹ Xen. *Hell.* 1-2.2.

⁴⁴² J. K. Anderson, *Xenophon* (New York: 1974), 66.

⁴⁴³ Xenophon argues that he is not too young to replace Proxenos, who was "about thirty" when he died; Xen. *An.* 2.6.20, 3.1.14.

⁴⁴⁴ Peter M. Green, "Text and Context in the Matter of Xenophon's Exile," *Ventures into Greek History, Essays in Honor of N.G.L. Hammond*, ed. Ian Worthington (Oxford: 1994), 222.

⁴⁴⁵ Green, "Xenophon's Exile" (1994), 226.

in 393, he then had the time to write.⁴⁴⁶ The *Hellenica*, with the *Anabasis*, is a logical bridge to the Spartan-Persian War. If his writing commenced at the time of his acquisition of Scillus, we must look prior to 393 as the *terminus ante quem* of Thucydides' active composition.

It is at this point that internal evidence in Thucydides can shed light on the extent of his active composition. Throughout his history Thucydides takes pause to comment on personalities. These comments have been termed eulogies for the express reason that he refrains from comment on individuals who are living at the time of his writing; those on whom he does comment number nearly two dozen.⁴⁴⁷ Much has been written about Thucydides' comments on Archelaus, King of Macedonia.

Archelaus reigned as Macedonian king from 413 to 399. Thucydides gives tribute to him in the year 429 of his narrative:

Of these (i.e., "strong places and fortresses") there was no great number, most of these now found in the country having been erected subsequently by Archelaus, son of Perdiccas, on his accession, who also cut straight roads, and otherwise put the kingdom on a better footing as regards horses, heavy infantry, and other war material than had been done by all the eight kings that preceded him. Thuc. 2.100.2

When was this written? What allowed Macedonia to prosper was the weakening of the Greek states, especially the defeat of the Athenians at Syracuse in 413, the same year as Archelaus' accession. Thessaly was torn with internal strife; Chalcidice entered a time of relative calm, with Amphipolis secure as an

⁴⁴⁶ Anderson, *Xenophon* (1974), 165.

⁴⁴⁷ See Appendix.

independent state rather than a base for Athenian imperialism.⁴⁴⁸ By 407/6 Athens publishes a decree, thanking Archelaus for services in the form of shipbuilding products. While it is questionable that Archelaus had by this date achieved all or most of the accomplishments suggested in the Thucydidean tribute, it is the tone of the tribute that is of consequence. The tribute comes close to being a summary of a life's effort.⁴⁴⁹ Granted, this reasoning has been dismissed as a "mechanical argument," that is, Thucydides could have written this immediately after significant achievement, i.e., by 406.⁴⁵⁰ But again we are back to the two dozen tributes: the one thing the individuals have in common for Thucydides is that they are all dead. There are no other tributes or praises that can be termed *encomia* in all the rest of the history pertaining to those who had careers during the Peloponnesian War, hence another modern critic concludes that the chapter must have been written after Archelaus' death in 399.⁴⁵¹

As if to stir up the question, a problematic inscription from the island of Thasos was published in 1983.⁴⁵² In this inscription, a list of local magistrates, is the entry for 397: "Lichas, the son of Arkesilas." This was considered a phenomenal find: Thucydides, narrating events in the last year of his history, 411,

⁴⁴⁸ N.G.L. Hammond and G. T. Griffith, *History of Macedonia: 550-336 BC*, vol. 2 (Oxford: 1972), 138.

⁴⁴⁹ Hornblower, *Commentary* (1991), 1.337.

⁴⁵⁰ Gomme, *Commentary* (1962), 2.247.

⁴⁵¹ Hornblower, *Thucydides* (1987), 143, 151-153.

⁴⁵² J. Pouilloux and F. Salviat, "Lichas, Lacedemonien, archonte a Thasos et le livre viii de *Thucydide*," *CRAI* (1983), 376-403.

mentions the subsequent death of "Lichas the son of Arkesilas."⁴⁵³ Simply put, if this same Lichas was alive to serve as archon in 397, and the historian mentions his death, then Thucydides was actively writing at least seven years after the end of the war. This conclusion has come under much attack, but most of the argument seems to be centered on the fact that Lichas and Arkesilas are not unique names.⁴⁵⁴ They may or may not be unique, but their pairing begs the possibility of Thucydidean activity to 397.

If Thucydides did live until the early years of the fourth century, what are we to make of the absence in his work of any other fourth-century events, especially the trial of Socrates in 399? Socrates is not mentioned in the history to 411, though it is evident that he was well known in Athens by this time.⁴⁵⁵ Thucydides, getting to the politically charged closing years of the war, surely would have mentioned Socrates in the narrative of the final hurrah of the ill-fated career of his student Alcibiades just before Athens' final defeat at Aegospotami in 404; Socrates certainly would have received mention on the day of his service, in 406, as the *prytaneis* of the Athenian Assembly, when he refused to try the Arginusae admirals.⁴⁵⁶ This last event would have been the most likely time to make note of his trial and eulogize his life. Thucydides had a sense of structure in his history, presenting disturbing parallels along with theses and antitheses; a eulogy of Socrates and note of his trial would have been a striking example of the

⁴⁵³ *Thuc.* 8.84.2.

⁴⁵⁴ P. Cartledge, "A New Lease of Life for Lichas Son of Arkesilas?" *LCM* ix (7) (1984), 98-102.

⁴⁵⁵ E.g. Ar. *Clouds*, presented in 423 (K.J. Dover, "Aristophanes," *OCD*³, 164.), where Socrates is portrayed as a corrupt teacher of the youth of Athens.

⁴⁵⁶ *Xen. Mem.* 1.1.18, 4.4.2. 21.

morality of an individual over a mob. But Thucydides' narrative, as noted above, ends in 411.

Historians would be able to make much better sense of the sometimes troubling passages in Thucydides' history if they could show that the man lived until 393 or even just 397. First of all, the tribute to Archelaus would no longer be considered anomalous. Then there are the parallel forecasts of Pericles and Alcibiades of Athenian defeat. Pericles had this to say in the second year of the war:

Even if now, in obedience to the general law of decay, we should ever be forced to yield, still it will be remembered that we held rule over more Hellenes than any other Hellenic state, that we sustained the greatest wars against their united or separate powers, and inhabited a city unrivaled by any other in resources or magnitude. Thuc. 2.64.3

Modern historians are quick not to make too much of this prediction saying that "we should not too rapidly assume" that this passage was written by Thucydides after 404;⁴⁵⁷ or that it is "difficult to believe that this is what Perikles would have said had he been able to survey all that happened between 430 and 404."⁴⁵⁸ This is all well and fine, but Thucydides is the author, and in the next chapter he states that he lived to the end of the war, witnessing the Athenian defeat.

Six books later we have Alcibiades' prediction and a warning in 412/411 addressed to the Persian Tissaphernes about the danger of a Spartan victory:

It was not likely that the Spartans would free the Hellenes from the Hellenic Athenians, without freeing them also from the barbarian Persians, unless overthrown by him in the meantime. Alcibiades, therefore, urged him to wear them both out at first, and after reducing the Athenian power as much as he could, forthwith to rid the country of the Peloponnesians.

⁴⁵⁷ Hornblower, *Commentary* (1991), 1.339.

⁴⁵⁸ Gomme, *Commentary* (1962), 2.178.

Thuc. 8.46.3-4

Neither Tissaphernes nor the Persians took heed of this warning. Within four years of the Spartan victory they were in Asia Minor agitating, successfully for at least a short period of time, for the freedom of the Asiatic Greeks. Scholars have often pointed out that Thucydides admired in his leaders the possession of *pronoia*, that is, the ability to see ahead. However, the forecast we see in the Pericles example is acceptable because we know that Thucydides lived to the end of the war, and paradoxically critics are happy to grant that the specter of defeat in his speech is simply evidence of his *pronoia*. The example of forecasting by Alcibiades is acceptable, not so much due to his *pronoia*, but rather Thucydides' complete understanding of the Spartan mentality. Perhaps, though, the reason for the astuteness of Pericles and Alcibiades is that Thucydides lived to see beyond the end of the war and to witness in the first few years of the fourth century the Spartan struggle on behalf of the Asian Greeks.

Another difficulty that a death date of 393 would help address is the composition problem of the first half of the history compared to the second half of the history. There is a different texture to each.⁴⁵⁹ The first half has been edited and reworked with the awareness that the war has been lost by the Athenians, a war that they should have won. It has been remarked that Thucydides, after much work on his history, seems to have embraced the 'great man' view of history.⁴⁶⁰ This alone could account for the narrative differences in his work,

⁴⁵⁹ Gomme, *et al.*, *Commentary* (1981), 5.1.

⁴⁶⁰ Hornblower, *Commentary* (1991), 1.376.

including his eulogy of Archelaus. But it may also be that Thucydides was a slow editor. If he was working on the text from the beginning of the war, it is hard to explain otherwise how he could have lived at least to the war's end, but stopped writing his manuscript a full seven years before that end.

As noted above, Thucydides' "assassination either in Athens or in Thrace, has very little authority; but it certainly suits the end of his work." The authorities to which Gomme refers are two: the first being Marcellinus, who in the sixth century AD, isolated extant Thucydidean *scholia*, which, he claims, states that Thucydides was murdered.⁴⁶¹ It is a slight text with substantial internal contradiction. The second source is Pausanias, writing in the second century A.D., who says that, "he was treacherously murdered."⁴⁶² While Thucydides' assassination would suit the abrupt end of the History, what reasons could be put forward as to why he would be assassinated? In any attempt to answer this question it would be prudent to address the political leanings of the author and the political environment of the dozen or so years after of the history itself.

In 411 BC a revolutionary oligarchy, the Four Hundred, was set up to rule Athens.⁴⁶³ Despite an initial moderate program, extremists under the leadership of Pisander took control. In the spring of 411 prominent democrats were murdered and the council intimidated. Thucydides gives a vivid account of the time:

⁴⁶¹ Marcellin. *Vit. Thuc.* 32. I wish to thank Judith Maitland and Ian Plant for making available to me their unpublished translation.

⁴⁶² *Paus.* 1. 23.11.

⁴⁶³ *Thuc.* 8.47-97.

Fear, and the sight of the numbers of conspirators, closed the mouths of the rest; or if any ventured to rise in opposition, he was promptly put to death in some convenient way, and there was neither search for the murderers nor justice to be had against them if suspected; but The People remained motionless, being so thoroughly cowed that men thought themselves lucky to escape violence, even when they held their tongues.
Thuc. 8.66.2

The Four Hundred were subsequently overthrown and democracy was restored in 410. Of this restoration, known as the Five Thousand, Thucydides says, "It was during the first period of this constitution that the Athenians appear to have enjoyed the best government that they ever did, at least in my time."⁴⁶⁴

My interest in this subject was prompted by the coincidence of these remarks and the fact that the history breaks off a mere nine paragraphs later. In the ensuing political turmoil it is easy to imagine that his observations targeted him for violence. This, of course, begs the question of publication, or at least knowledge, of his work. Except for Adcock's bizarre shipwreck scenario of Thucydides on the way to deliver the last chapters to his publisher, most modern scholars take the position that there is no single passage of the history that would have been published if Thucydides had lived to finish his work.⁴⁶⁵ On the other hand, it is not unlikely that there was, to some degree, a contemporary awareness of his work in progress. He was certainly interviewing people about their wartime activities and visiting the locations of the same.

At the end of the war in 404, Spartan support again gave the oligarchs supremacy in the form of the Thirty Tyrants, governing in much the same way as

⁴⁶⁴ Thuc. 8.97.2.

⁴⁶⁵ William K. Prentice, "How Thucydides Wrote His History," *CP*, vol. 25, no. 2 (Apr., 1930), 126.

the Four Hundred.⁴⁶⁶ The Thirty itself was overthrown in the spring of 403, which led to the reinstitution of democracy in September 403. It is at this time that the general amnesty was proclaimed; Thucydides himself seems to have been recalled, or at least given the opportunity to return, a year before through the efforts of Oenobius.⁴⁶⁷

The political environment at the turn of the fourth century was no less volatile. In a paper that reviews the political circumstances surrounding the trial and execution of Socrates in 399, J. O. Loberg notes, "The leading democrats of the early fourth century dared not risk the possible effects that his political criticisms might have on the recently restored *demos* and accordingly decided to suppress him."⁴⁶⁸ Thucydides was not the gadfly that Socrates was. His history offers, however, even with its rare overt criticism of Athenian politics and leadership, a preponderance of evidence of a state bent on self-destruction through the mob rule of radical democracy, and the violent oppression of oligarchy; the killing spirit of revenge obvious in both regimes. Neither side fares well in Thucydides' narrative and the remaining seven years in the telling would with certainty have been just as honest and dispassionately brutal. If indeed Thucydides' working manuscript were known, it is doubtful his enemies would have acquiesced to its publication: his completed written words, stronger than the philosopher's spoken words, would have proved more than troubling.

⁴⁶⁶ Xen. *Hell.* 2.2-4; G. B. Grundy, *Thucydides and the History of His Age* (Oxford: 1948), 208.

⁴⁶⁷ Paus. 1.23.11.

⁴⁶⁸ J. O. Loberg, "The Trial of Socrates," *The CJ*, vol. 23, no. 8 (May, 1928), 602; Green, "Xenophon's Exile" (1994), 226, also notes the political milieu surrounding Xenophon's exile: "Xenophon's exile thus falls into the same general category as the exactly contemporaneous trial of Andocides and Socrates, as part of a vengeful anti-oligarchic backlash."

I doubt very much that the accepted dates of Thucydides' death will move too far from ca. 400 BC, though they have in recent years moved away from the definitive 404. The internal and external evidence for a later date, though circumstantial, is not insignificant.

APPENDIX

Individuals eulogized in Thucydides and their dates of death.

Pausanias	480
Aristeides	467
Themistocles	459
Pericles	429
Cleon	422
Brasidas	422
Alcibiades	404/3
Athenagoras	(last record: 415)
Hermocrates	408
Nicias	413
Antiphon	411
Phrynichus	411
Theramenes	404/3
Hyperbolus	411
Phormio	428 c.
Demosthenes	413
Achidamus	427
Cnemus	(last record 429)
Alcidas	(last record: 426)
Gylippus	(last record: 405)
Astyochus	(last record: 411)
Archelaus	399

Compiled from H. D. Westlake, *Individuals in Thucydides* (Cambridge: 1968).

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